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ABSTRACT

Intended to provide practical information pertaining to methods and techniques for speech elicitation and production, the monograph offers specific methods and techniques to elicit spontaneous speech in bilingual students. Chapter 1, "Traditional Methodologies for Language Production and Recording," presents an overview of studies using various traditional approaches to elicit language. Chapter 2, "Interactive Language Research," offers some general concepts dealing with language research in the classroom and at home, i.e., in the normal milieu where children spend most of their time. Chapter 3, "Methods of Observation," offers some specific suggestions concerning the use of observation as a technique to record language samples. Chapter 4, "The Interview," presents techniques that can be used to maximize the use of the interview as a procedure to elicit speech. Chapter 5, "Elicitation Techniques for Spontaneous Speech," offers a listing of creative procedures intended to encourage children to participate in spontaneous conversations with peers, adults, and/or researchers. Chapter 6, "Qualifications of the Language Researcher," presents some minimal requirements that the researcher should meet in order to be able: to gather authentic spontaneous speech; to do language analysis; and, subsequently, to establish hypotheses and make inferences and predictions. (NQA)

Eliciting Spontaneous Speech in Bilingual Students:

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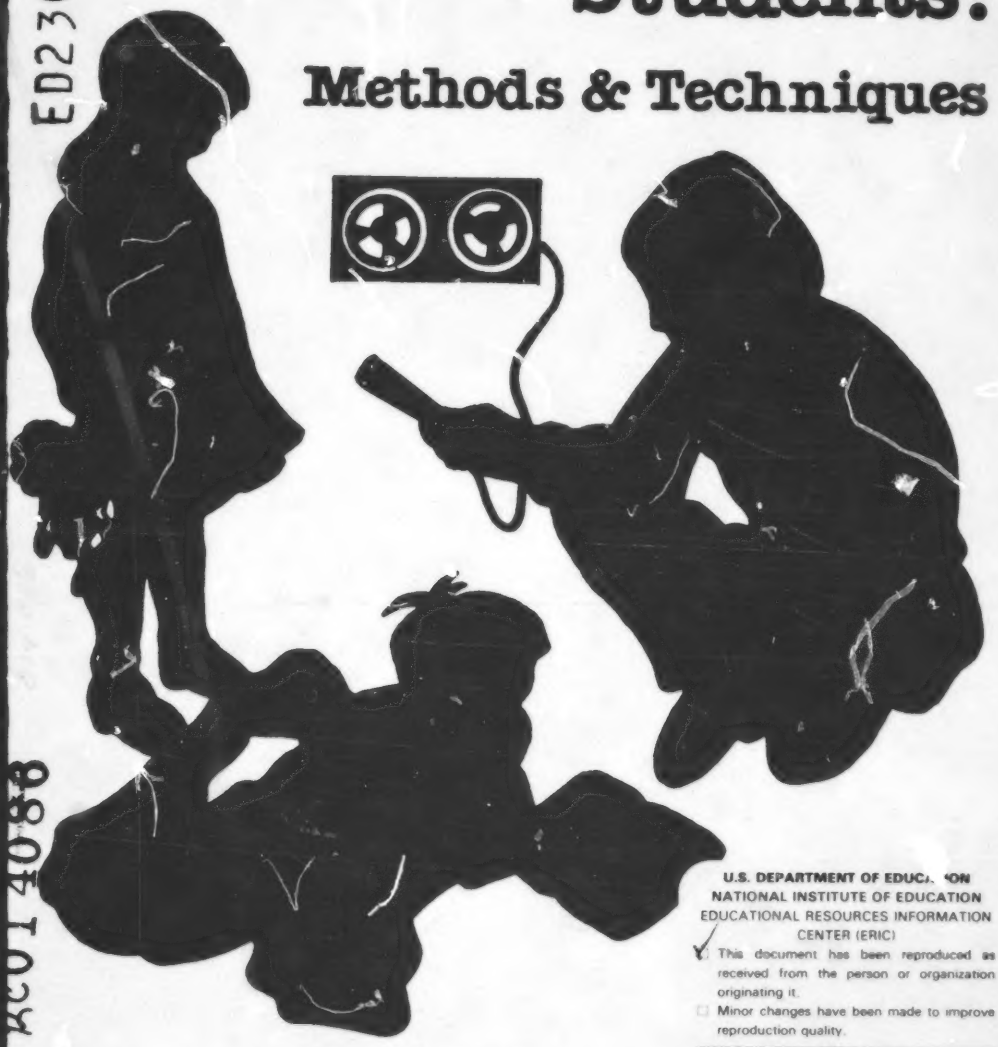

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Eliciting Spontaneous Speech in Bilingual Students: Methods and Techniques

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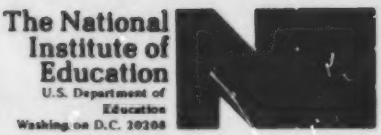

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Cover designed by: Debra Ann Guerrero

To Gwen Baker and Consuelo Nieto,
for all the good reasons.

I have gradually become convinced that the most important knowledge we can give our students is how to approach the discipline. True, we must teach facts, but facts are changing so quickly that what we say today may well be inaccurate tomorrow. We also must teach theory, but theories are only as good as the evidence that supports them, and they too often have an ephemeral quality. What we can teach with a modicum of timelessness, however, is how child researchers go about the business of studying children. What types of questions do they ask? What methods do they use to address these questions? And what assumptions or probabilistic risks are involved in drawing their conclusions? This sort of knowledge may enable the student to evaluate new facts or theories as they emerge and thus to weather the rapid advances that surely will continue in this subject in the near future.

(Vasta, 1979, pp. IX-X)

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R.C. A.W. C.N.

PREFACE

This monograph has been prepared in order to provide practical information in the area of methods and techniques for speech elicitation and production.

This is the second volume of the series on language and reading being developed by the authors. The first volume, Theories and Research on Second Language Acquisition (Cornejo, 1981), offers a comprehensive overview of traditional and contemporary theories and hypotheses about the way children acquire first and second languages.

The present volume offers specific methods and techniques intended to elicit spontaneous speech in bilingual students.

The third volume, Analysis of Discourse in Bilingual Children, is in preparation.

Subsequent volumes will deal with the following topics: methods for recording, transcribing, and analyzing speech; the relationship between first and second languages; second language fluency and second language literacy; writing and reading skills in bilingual students and related areas of this body of knowledge.

The research project reported here was funded in part by the Program on Women and Minorities, National Institute of Education. The main purpose of the Program is to increase and refine the participation of women and minorities in educational research.

R.C. A.W. C.N.
Pacific Beach, California
December, 1982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... v

PREFACE..... vi

page

INTRODUCTION..... 1

CHAPTER ONE:
TRADITIONAL METHODOLOGIES FOR
LANGUAGE PRODUCTION AND RECORDING..... 3

CHAPTER TWO:
INTERACTIVE LANGUAGE RESEARCH..... 18

CHAPTER THREE:
METHODS OF OBSERVATION..... 21

CHAPTER FOUR: THE INTERVIEW..... 30

CHAPTER FIVE:
ELICITATION TECHNIQUES FOR SPONTANEOUS SPEECH..... 42

CHAPTER SIX:
QUALIFICATIONS OF THE LANGUAGE RESEARCHER..... 90

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 97

APPENDIX: VISUALS.....104

ABOUT THE AUTHORS.....113

INTRODUCTION

> An instructor must fulfill many conflicting needs in order to present an effective course in this subject: the need to be up to date but not to ignore the classics, the need to present a coherent world view but to represent all schools of thought, the need to consider theories but to respect empirical information in its own right (Vasta, 1979, p. IX).

In presenting this comprehensive set of methods and techniques for spontaneous language/speech elicitation, we have tried to offer: (a) some insight into the nature of research on child language, (b) language observation and recording techniques applicable and valid in recording children's speech, and (c) a corpus of language samples that will provide the reader with a vivid and "live" example of authentic language interaction.

In reviewing the rather extensive specialized literature, we became keenly aware that most treatises on language acquisition, language elicitation, and related disciplines relegated the sections on techniques to rather obscure appendices or treated them summarily in an introductory chapter.

We also became aware of the fact that extensive analyses of alleged "spontaneous" speech of children had

often been done on a limited sample elicited through the traditional adult/child, question/answer type of interaction.

Thus, these techniques are offered to the reader in the hope that they will contribute to an improvement and refinement of procedures for language research.

This publication comprises six chapters: Chapter One, Traditional Methodologies for Language Production and Recording, presents an overview of studies using various traditional approaches to elicit language.

Chapter Two, Interactive Language Research, offers some general concepts dealing with the topic of language research in the classroom and at home, i.e., in the normal milieu where children spend most of their time.

Chapter Three, Methods of Observation, offers some specific suggestions concerning the use of observation as a technique to record language samples.

Chapter Four, The Interview, presents techniques that can be used to maximize the use of the interview as a procedure to elicit speech.

Chapter Five, Elicitation Techniques for Spontaneous Speech, offers a rather comprehensive listing of creative procedures intended to encourage children to participate in spontaneous conversations with peers, adults, and/or researchers.

Chapter Six, Qualifications of the Language Researcher, presents some minimal requirements that the researcher should meet in order to be able to gather authentic spontaneous speech, to be able to do language analysis and, subsequently, to be able to establish hypotheses and make inferences and predictions.

CHAPTER ONE

TRADITIONAL METHODOLOGIES FOR LANGUAGE PRODUCTION AND RECORDING

> We obtain language samples for different purposes. One is to be able to describe the language use of an individual. Another is to compare a child's linguistic performance with that of his peers of similar age in his community (Darley and Spriestersbach, 1978, p. 117).

This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of various language elicitation methods and techniques that have been used from the time of Charles Darwin to the present. It will describe in some detail those techniques that we have considered to be more relevant and reliable for gathering language data.

Throughout his professional career Charles Darwin (1887) kept detailed records of phenomena and events that he observed and considered of scientific importance for documenting his theories. In the diary, "A Biographical Sketch of an Infant," he offers an outline of the early stages of development in his son, who he nicknames "Doddy." In the sketch, he discusses the way the child started to develop his reflex actions, vision, movement, anger, fear, pleasurable sensations, affections, association of ideas and reason, moral sense, shyness, and means of communication. Speaking of the way the child developed his capacity to communicate, Darwin says:

> At exactly the age of a year, he made the great step of inventing a word for food, namely, mum, but what led him to it I did not discover. And now instead of beginning to cry when he was hungry he used this word in a demonstrative manner or as a verb, implying "give me food" (p. 293).

Darwin's sketch has greatly contributed to the acceptance and generalized usage of observation as a technique to record verbal behavior in children and adults. The technique has been expanded and refined and is now used in several of the research-oriented behavioral sciences.

Preyer (1888-1889) in his study, "Mind of a Child," also reports on observations of children's linguistic behavior, and the interaction between thought processes and verbalization of concepts and ideas.

Piaget, the Swiss psychologist (1926, 1959), also used informal observations in his early attempts to analyze the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of children. In his Institut Rousseau in Geneva, he devoted several years of his illustrious career to observe, record, and analyze children's growth and to disseminate his findings and observations to the academic and research communities.

> The method we have adopted is as follows: Two of us followed each a child (a boy) for about a month at the morning class at the Maison des Petits de l'Institut Rousseau, taking down in minute detail and in its context everything that was said by the child. In the class where our two subjects were observed the scholars draw or make whatever they like; they model and play at games of arithmetic and reading, etc. These activities take place in complete freedom; no check is put upon any desire that

> may manifest itself to talk or play together; no intervention takes place unless it is asked for (p. 5).

The second step in Piaget's methodology was to observe children's interactions as a group. Not just the behavior of one particular child, but the social interaction of a whole class.

> The subject of analysis will not be the verbatim report of conversations held, not by one or two specific children, but by the inmates of a whole room, in which they move about from one place to another and which they enter and leave at will. What has been taken down is really the outcome of observations made from a fixed place upon some twenty children on the move (p. 50).

Piaget had very specific and rather inflexible ideas concerning the capacity of children to communicate with one another. In trying to explain that the child's "verbal activity is not social," he developed a set of postulates and hypotheses. He says,

> Each child has his own world of hypotheses and solutions which he has never communicated to anyone, either because of his ego-centrism, or for lack of the means of expression--which comes to the same thing, if (as we hope to show in this chapter) language is moulded on habits of thought (p. 79).

Basically, Piaget was trying to prove that children were able to conceptualize their environment and the universe in terms of their ownselves, but they had not developed the capacity to understand one another when involved in conversation.

Piaget asks "what then will happen when the chances of conversation lead children to exchange their ideas on the

verbal plane? Will they understand each other or not?" (p. 79). It was this concern that led Piaget to develop the "clinical method," which was popularized by his disciples and followers.

> In order to solve this problem we have had to undertake an experiment which consists in making one child tell or explain something to another. This procedure will doubtless be criticized as being removed from everyday life, where the child speaks spontaneously, without being made to, and especially without having been told what to relate or explain to his listener. We can only reply that we found no other way of solving the problem...The great thing is to turn the experiment into a game, to make it interesting (pp. 79-80).

One of the approaches of the "clinical method" was to tell a child a story and then have him/her retell the story to another child awhile later. Two children would be brought into the room, and the researcher would explain the procedures to them. One of them, called the "reproducer," would go out and wait outside. The other one, call the "explainer," would be told a story. Once he heard and understood the story quite well, the reproducer would be called inside. The explainer then would tell the reproducer the whole story. His verbalization would be taken down "in extenso" by the researcher.

A variation of the method goes like this: The explainer is asked to tell the researcher a story. Then, he is sent out to tell that same story to the reproducer. The retelling of the story by the reproducer is recorded again in extenso.

McCarthy (1930) reports about a study where the researcher used toys and pictures to elicit spontaneous speech from preschool children. Toys and other types of "realia" have been used quite often by linguists working in the area of language acquisition and analysis.

Leopold's study (1939-1949) is one of the most comprehensive and most authentic descriptions of infant language acquisition to date. Being a linguist, he made every effort to record the child's language in its natural habitat with a maximum of accuracy and comprehensiveness. He was particularly critical of theoreticians and philosophers of language who develop hypotheses and constructs based on opinions and theories.

> ...students of child language as well as linguists who try to utilize child language for theorizing about the origin of language prefer the construction of sweeping syntheses to accurate detail studies... (p. xii).

He was particularly concerned with the validity of the methods that researchers use in obtaining samples of children's speech, an issue that has haunted researchers and theoreticians alike.

> My method is careful observation and systematic presentation of its results in monograph form. I resorted neither to experiment, nor to teaching, nor to the question and answer method. This implies that the linguistic development of the child was not forced in any way (p. xiii).

The ethical considerations of respect toward the individual whose language is being recorded are clearly stated by Leopold, together with his confidence that his study would greatly contribute to enhance and enrich that body of knowledge.

> ..., I hope that this linguistic study will contribute to a strictly scientific and, at the same time, a thoroughly vital understanding of child language. I have not looked upon my child merely as a laboratory object. The exact observation of her language development has enhanced my enjoyment in watching her grow and unfold her personality (p. xiv).

The Preface of Volume I of Leopold's four volumes should be compulsory reading for any student, teacher, linguist, researcher, or theoretician who intends to embark on the rigorous but rewarding area of research on child language acquisitions. Leopold studied the language acquisition sequence of his daughter, Hildegard Rose, born on July 3, 1930, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The child was always exposed to both German and English. Leopold spoke to her only in German "and adhered to this principle with rigidity" (p. 13). Mrs. Leopold always spoke to her in English, but from time to time would use a German word to emphasize or clarify a concept. In the presence of the child, her father would speak in German to her mother, while her mother would speak in English.

> A diary was kept uninterruptedly from the child's eighth week on, in great detail until the end of the seventh year; thereafter, only striking features were recorded. The observations were written down as they were made, usually in daily entries. From I; 7 on they became too numerous for this procedure; they were then entered on slips in my pocket and transferred in systematic order into the diary at infrequent intervals, usually every Sunday. I relied almost exclusively on my own observations, because phonetic exactness was deemed essential, especially during the first two years,...(p. 14).

Barker and Wright (1951, 1955) studied the typical daily activities of small children. Researchers compiled comprehensive recordings of every behavior shown by the children.

Miller (1956) used imitation as a technique for language elicitation. He was especially interested in determining the relationship between the length of an utterance and the capacity to repeat it. His work has been replicated by researchers who have used the formula of seven words plus two minus two words to create

utterances to be repeated by children. The basic idea is to create utterances that vary in length from five to nine words per sentence. This "magical" number is associated with the concept of short-term memory span.

Several researchers have used tests to elicit language in small children. Language tests are not part of the scope of this monograph. Nevertheless, we would like to mention here the test developed by Berko (1958). She was one of the first language researchers to develop a test to measure children's knowledge of morphologic rules. She created a series of sentences to study plurals, possessives, third person singular, present possessive and past tense, and comparatives and superlatives.

To test plurals, she created "nonsense" words such as "Wug." She would show children a picture of something that looked like a bird and would say: "This is a Wug." Showing a second picture with two of them she would say:

> Now there is another one
> There are two of them.
> There are two...

The children were expected to, and in fact did, offer the plural "Wugs."

Berko's study had a tremendous influence on the subsequent research done in the '60s and '70s in the area of transformational grammar applied to language formation and language usage.

Darley and Winitz (1961) did a comprehensive listing of research studies dealing with the age at which infants acquire basic vocabulary.

Weir (1962) recorded the speech of her two-and-one-half-year-old son before he would fall asleep. She did this for several weeks in a row in order to compile a corpus of the infant's presleep verbalizations.

Schaffer and Emerson (1964) used the technique popularized as "parental interview" in their research on language acquisition. They interviewed thirty-seven mothers of newborn infants at predetermined intervals for one year. The approach calls for the mothers to recall specified events and behaviors shown by the babies.

Brown and Bellugi (1964) and Brown, Cazden, and Bellugi (1969) conducted an extensive and comprehensive study to collect speech samples from three children for a total of 12 months. The researchers visited the children in their homes every other week and recorded their interaction with their mothers. The speech samples, or "linguistic corpora," were then analyzed and codified.

Other researchers doing studies that can be classified as "stream of behavior" are Braine (1963), Bloom (1970), and Shatz and Gelman (1973).

Schaefer (1965) is the author of the Child's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory. The purpose of the inventory is to gather information on the parent-child relationships.

Church (1966) had three mothers keep comprehensive and highly detailed diaries of one of their children from the time the child was born until the age of two. The mothers received general guidelines for their observations, but they were also encouraged to record with much detail any behaviors that were "amusing, suprising, or puzzling" (p. vii).

O'Donnell et al. (1967) used a particularly innovative approach. They selected some animated cartoons of Aesop's Fables, and showed them to kindergarten and elementary school children with the sound track off. The children were expected to narrate the stories to the researcher and then answer some questions after the showings.

Thomas et al. (1968) used the method of "interval-sampling" or "time-sampling." Specific behaviors were identified prior to observation. Then a child would be observed for a very small period of time, sometimes as briefly as ten seconds. At the end of this "interval," the observer would record the occurrence of the behavior being targeted by the study. Then, again they would observe the child for another ten seconds. This technique provides for more accuracy in the recording of behaviors.

Stern et al. (1969) did systematic observations of mother-child interaction by using "rating scales" to determine the child's behavior. For example, the child's social behavior would be rated from 1 to 7, where 1 was "timid," and 7 was "outgoing." The mother and the child would be observed in a clinic; the observers would sit behind a one-way screen and would take notes of personality traits of both mother and child. The traits to be observed were, among others,

dominance-permissiveness
emotionality-placidity
changeability-sameness

Menyuk (1969) used imitation as a technique for speech elicitation. She developed a group of short sentences (from three to ten words) and asked children to repeat them. The subjects were selected from two groups: one group was comprised of three- to six-year-olds with normal speech; the second group was comprised of three- to six-year-olds with deviant speech. Menyuk offers a comprehensive analysis of imitation as a viable technique for language elicitation.

Chomsky (1969) gave children specific tasks to determine their capacity to deal with transformations. She would identify a specific structure such as "The doll is easy to see." Then she would put a blindfold on the face of a doll and would ask the child, "Is the doll easy to see or hard to see?" Depending upon the type of

answer, the researcher determined the child's level of sophistication in terms of understanding syntactic structures and being able to make use of appropriate transformations to convey meaning.

Kessel (1970) studied children's comprehension of spoken language by giving a child an ambiguous sentence and asking him/her to point to a picture that in the opinion of the child corresponded to the sentence. Then the child would be asked why he/she had chosen that picture. He used sentences such as "They fed her dog biscuits" and "He told her baby stories." It is important to note here that the person uttering these sentences for the child to hear has to have excellent training in linguistic research, since stress on a particular word in the sentence would show meaning in that direction. For example, if you stress the word "her" in the sentence, "He told her baby stories," you would convey one meaning. If you stress "baby," you would convey a different meaning.

Brown (1970) analyzed the sentences that three mothers addressed to their small children. He and his research assistants taped children's language samples in their homes, their natural habitat. The recordings were done for an extended period of time, sometimes several hours a day, for several days.

Scholes (1970) used imitation as a technique to determine language acquisition in children three to four and one-half years old.

Blasdell and Jensen (1970) also used imitation as a technique to determine language acquisition in infants.

Other researchers using imitation as a technique for language elicitation are Jordan and Robinson (1972), and Carrow and Mauldin (1973).

Leach (1972) used interrogation as a technique to elicit speech in young children. He selected a sample of

mothers with infants whose ages ranged from 26 to 60 months old and had the mothers ask the children questions. This study provides extensive data and analysis of the various factors and constraints involved in using questioning as a technique for speech elicitation.

Cornejo (1973) used toys, comics, and non-representational drawings to elicit spontaneous speech from Spanish-English bilingual children in Texas.

Hubbell et al. (1974) selected puzzles from the WISC and had parents of children ages 3 and 6 help their infants to put the pieces together.

Condon and Sander (1974) used microanalysis of sound films of babies' movements to determine the infants' reactions to the speech of adults.

Rogers-Warren and Baer (1976) used a method called "frequency of occurrence" in their study of children's behaviors. In their study they analyzed classroom interaction among children to determine the level of "sharing" and "praising" that took place in the teaching-learning interaction.

Fraser et al. (1980) used role-playing exercises as a technique to elicit speech. The purpose of their study was to identify schema that would shed light into the area of acquisition of pragmatic competence in second language learning.

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CHAPTER TWO

INTERACTIVE LANGUAGE RESEARCH

> Field work is also an antidote for excessive theorizing. Theorizing becomes excessive when the same problems or the same data are looked at again and again at the expense of ignoring other significant issues (Samarin, 1967, p.4).

Interactive language research has a key role in the data gathering procedures, in the development of theories on language acquisition, and in the preparation of second language instructional materials. Interactive language research is very similar to field linguistics. The main difference lies in the fact that, in interactive language research, the linguist/researcher verbally or socially interacts with the person or persons whose language is being recorded. If the situation so requires, the researcher may also blend into the social environment in order to maximize the authentic value of the linguistic corpus being gathered. For example, a graduate student working towards a master's or a Ph.D. at a university, who is also a teacher at a local school district, may be assigned the task of gathering speech samples from some previously specified students in the school. The graduate student has been trained to use spontaneous speech elicitation techniques. His/her task would fall into the category of interactive language research rather than field linguistics, since the whole process of

language sample gathering will be an intimate verbal interaction between the teacher and the students in his/her classroom.

Interactive language research allows the researcher to reach out and establish direct contact with the person(s) whose language is going to be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. It prevents the researcher from using second-hand types of language corpora and provides an opportunity for analysis of authentic, spontaneous speech.

The multilingual makeup of American society, where a large number of native languages coexist with immigrant languages, makes this country a rich and versatile laboratory for interactive language research. Most of the languages spoken all over the world are found somewhere in this country. When an immigrant family from South America arrives in this country, family members bring with them their Spanish or Portuguese (the official languages of most countries in South America). But they might also bring with them a vernacular language such as Mapuche, Quechua, or Guarani, spoken by some of the members of that family.

Interactive language research, then, deals with living, extant languages spoken in the world today. It falls into the category of synchronic linguistic research. (Synchronic linguistic research deals with the languages of present times; diachronic linguistic research deals with the languages of the past.)

Language research has had a tremendous impact on our understanding of language and culture. Samples of specific linguistic populations provide invaluable information about the way those groups deal with grammatical, phonological, syntactical, morphological, lexical, and semantic features of the languages. Samples also provide data about the way those groups perceive their environment and the way they conceive the interaction between humans, nature, and the universe.

The language research act involves two or more participants: the researcher and the person(s) whose language is being recorded. When the researcher has received appropriate training in the area of speech elicitation, the language corpus is culturally valid and linguistically accurate. When the researcher has not received appropriate training, the language corpus can be unauthentic, invalid, and useless in terms of its value for establishing hypotheses about the language spoken by the community at large.

Language research will play a key role in the development of culturally and linguistically appropriate curriculum materials, teacher training manuals, and assessment instruments to meet the needs of the expanding linguistic minority communities in the country. It is because of this that appropriate research tools are necessary to facilitate the process of gathering linguistic data.

The chapters that follow present specific suggestions for observing and recording linguistic behavior of language minority children.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODS OF OBSERVATION

> When it is important to see behavior in its natural settings, to grasp the dynamic, situation-based features of conduct, some form of observation becomes essential as the primary method of acquiring information (Black and Champion, 1976, p. 329).

Observation as a method to collect linguistic behavior data needs to be clearly understood by researchers and by their data collecting assistants. Errors in recording observed linguistic behavior will eventually lead to erroneous findings and, ultimately, to erroneous conclusions in terms of hypotheses and theoretical postulates.

This chapter, then, will offer an overview of the various factors conducive to a better understanding and application of observation as an approach for gathering linguistic data.

In discussing observational procedures, the following issues will be addressed:

Rationale for observational studies

The nature of observation as a method

The purposes of observation

Types of observation

Choosing observational methods

Constraints

Rationale for Observational Studies

There are some instances when observation lends itself better than other methods for recording linguistic behavior data. For example, the linguistic and paralinguistic interaction between a parent and a five-month-old child can be more accurately recorded by observation than by a mere audio recording or video recording. The observer can describe the emotions and feelings that become an integral part of the communicative interaction of the two people.

The Nature of Observation as a Method

Most scientific discovery through the centuries has been the result of either casual or systematic observations. In our everyday interaction with other human beings or with our milieu, we are always conducting some kind of conscious or unconscious observational research. We pay special attention to body language, to various inflections of the voice, to stressful or hesitant speech, and to pitch, tone, juncture, and other language features which will provide us with some information concerning the affective status of our interlocutors.

During observation for data gathering purposes, we conduct a more in-depth analysis of our environment and place more emphasis on the appropriateness of our data gathering techniques in order to maximize the validity and accuracy of the data to be collected.

Observation as a tool of scientific research usually offers the following features:

1. It captures the natural social context in which a person's behavior occurs.

2. It grasps the significant events and/or social relations of the participants.

3. It determines what constitutes reality from the standpoint of the world view, philosophy, or outlook of the observed.

4. It identifies regularities and recurrences in social life by comparing and contrasting data obtained in one study with those obtained in studies of other natural settings (Black and Champion, 1976, p. 330).

One of the most urgent prerequisites for observational studies is that they be conducted without disturbing the spontaneous, everyday routine of the people, events, or things being observed. The observer-investigator must be as non-obtrusive and inconspicuous as possible. If the observer is not careful in this respect, the "observees" might tend to behave in a manner that they may assume will please, or displease, the observer. As soon as this happens, the observation loses its value as a data gathering technique, since it will be recording unspontaneous linguistic behavior.

A crucial aspect of observation in this respect is the "conspicuousness" of the observer: It is well known that people tend to change their behavior when being observed. This change in behavior is usually directed toward making

a positive impression on the observer. "Observees'" change of behavior is well documented in the specialized literature. This phenomenon is known as the "Hawthorne effect." It gets its name from an experimental research project that was conducted in the city of Hawthorne, Massachusetts, in the 1950's, where divergent changes in the environment produced a higher level of productivity in workers. If the temperature of the work area was increased, productivity increased; if the temperature was lowered, productivity would also increase. The simple reason for this phenomenon was that each change in the work environment was met by an attitude of pride and determination on the part of the workers. They knew they were being observed and made every effort to show that they were capable of improving their output.

On several occasions, the authors of this publication had to discontinue an observation, an interview, or a dialog among children when the children became aware they were being observed or taped and started to act up and to speak in an unspontaneous manner.

The Purposes of Observation

The main purpose of observation is to capture behavior as it takes place in spontaneous, everyday life. Behavior, and human behavior in particular, takes place in a sociocultural, dynamic continuum. It is motivated and shaped by the various stimuli present in the social milieu and by the innate characteristics of the individuals interacting in the social discourse.

A second purpose of observation is to organize a corpus of linguistic data that may be available for analysis and verification of findings.

A third purpose of observation is to provide data for purposes of replication of methodologies used in previous studies.

A fourth purpose of observation is to provide valid information that can be used to make predictions, inferences, and generalizations concerning linguistic behavior of individuals and populations.

A fifth purpose of observation is to verify research variables that have been studied through other types of research, such as experimental or correlational studies.

Types of Observational Approaches

Observation as a research tool may be classified in a number of ways:

1. According to Approach: unsystematic
   systematic

   (a) Unsystematic observation: Unsystematic observation is the casual discovery of phenomena by accidental observation of a physical change, chemical change, or social event. A classical example of unsystematic observation is the case of Archimedes, who cried "Eureka" (I found it) when he accidentally discovered a method for determining the purity of gold.

   (b) Systematic Observation: Systematic observation is done according to a preconceived, carefully designed research method intended to record specific data about finite events or behaviors.

> By systematic observation, I mean only that observation and recording are done according to explicit procedures which permit replication and that rules are followed which permit the use of the logic of scientific inference (Reiss, 1971, p. 4).

A large number of social and biological research studies based on systematic observation are now being conducted. Two of the most significant studies are the work conducted by Jane Goodall observing the behavior of chimpanzees in their environment and the research on human sexuality conducted by Masters and Johnson.

2. According to Role of Investigator: Participant Observation

Nonparticipant Observation

(a) Participant Observation: In this type of observational research, the investigator is part of the social environment. The researcher may be a member of the group being studied, or may become a member of the group in order to record its linguistic behavior. An example of participant observation by a member of the group is the study done by John Dean about the Watergate Case. An example of participant observation by an outsider joining the group is the research reported by Franz Boas, who joined some Native American communities in order to record their speech.

(b) Nonparticipant Observation: This type of observational procedure is very common in the area of clinical psychology, where a patient's interaction with a nurse, doctor, or psychologist is observed through one-way windows by other professionals. The research conducted by Masters and Johnson, where they observed and recorded the sexual behavior of a large number of volunteers, falls into this category.

Both types of observation offer strengths and weaknesses. Participant observation allows the observers to record intimate types of behavior that might go unnoticed by a nonparticipant observer. On the other hand, the participant observers might miss significant behavior taking place around them while they are involved in interaction with one or more members of the group.

As with nonparticipant observations, the opposite could occur: The researchers might miss some subtle behavioral patterns such as a blink of an eye, a grin, a repressed tone of voice, or a slight body contact. By the same token, nonparticipant observers have a broader view of the general social and linguistic interaction of the group.

Choosing the Observational Method

When deciding about what type of observation is going to be used, the following factors may be considered, among others:

1. The Event to Be Observed: Is the event a casual chat among siblings? A wedding ceremony? A meeting of a political group in the community? A baptism? An argument?

2. The Setting: Where is the event taking place? At home? In the street? At an assembly site? At the local church? At the local school? In the fields?

3. The Researcher's Knowledge and Skills: Is the researcher quite familiar with the language spoken by the "observees?" Is the researcher a speaker of that language? Has the researcher been trained to do observations? How intensive was the training?

4. The Purpose: What is the purpose of the observation? To collect a linguistic corpus? To record phonological features? To verify previously reported findings? To prepare data for replication studies?

5. The Value of the Findings: Are the findings going to be validated? Are they going to be used for further research? Are they going to be disseminated for possible critique and challenge by other researchers?

6. The Replicability of the Methodology: Is the methodology clearly stated? Has it been implemented and reported in such a way that it lends itself for replicability studies?

Once these factors have been specified, the researcher will be able to determine the type of observational approach to be used.

Wiseman's study (1970) of Skid Row alcoholics is an example of a combined participant and nonparticipant research study.

Constraints

There are some moral, ethical, and legal issues associated with observational research methods. The key issue is the right to privacy. An "observee" may have authorized the researcher to observe his/her interaction with other people. Very often the "other people" involved are not aware that they are being observed. In reading the excellent study of Skid Row by Wiseman, it becomes quite obvious to the reader that it is absolutely impossible for the researcher to ask each one of those people for a written consent to be observed. The researchers often find themselves observing other human beings surrepticiously and thus violating their right to privacy. Jail prisoners, patients in mental hospitals, older senior citizens living in homes for the aged, and

children living in nurseries or institutions for the indigent are quite vulnerable to being observed without being consulted. The observers/researchers then need to be quite cognizant of these issues and should use a high degree of professional ethics and common sense when using observation as a research tool to gather linguistic data about individuals or groups of individuals.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE INTERVIEW

> But the interview is still more than tool and object of study. It is the art of sociological sociability, the game which we play for the pleasure of savoring its subtleties. It is our flirtation with life, our eternal affair, played hard and to win, but played with that detachment and amusement which gives us, win or lose, the spirit to rise up and interview again and again (Benny and Hughes, 1956, p. 138.)

As a tool for recording linguistic behavior, the interview offers quite a few advantages as compared to other approaches for speech elicitation. It is versatile; it offers a large number of options in terms of modalities for the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee.

This chapter, then, will offer an overview of the various factors conducive to a better understanding and application of the interview as an approach for gathering linguistic data.

The interview procedure lends itself to a personal, intimate interaction between the interviewer and the

interviewee. The interview is a very personal, almost warm type of social behavior. Even if the interview takes place over the phone, we can still determine to a certain degree the intellectual and emotional makeup of the individual to whom we are talking.

In discussing interview procedures, the following issues will be addressed:

Rationale for using the interview approaches

The nature of the interview as a method

The purposes of interviewing

Types of interviews

Constraints

Rationale for Using the Interview Approach

There are some instances where the interview lends itself more than other methods for recording linguisitic behavior data: A linguist might record the speech of a member of a vanishing language group; data may be needed about the language spoken by an isolated linguistic group whose language is spoken and understood by a limited number of language scholars; language samples from political, religious, or cultural leaders might be obtained from an interview rather than from observation or from other forms of data gathering. It would be impossible to "observe" the linguistic behavior of leaders such as the Pope, the Queen of England, and others in their everyday, intimate language interaction with their followers. But they could all be interviewed.

The Nature of the Interview as a Method

As was said before, the interview is a social event in the form of verbal communication for the purpose of

eliciting linguistic information which will eventually be analyzed in order to make generalizations, formulate predictions, and present hypotheses about the language spoken by the interviewee and other members of his/her linguistic community.

The interview offers some unique features that make it one of the most reliable methods for speech elicitation:

Flexibility: The interviewer can make use of a large number of possible interaction formats, such as open-ended questions, "yes-no" questions, leading questions, Socratic approach, discussional approach, debate approach, and others. It is up to the interviewer and the interviewee to make the interview a pleasant, productive, and enjoyable experience. Anybody watching talk shows on television can notice that sometimes the host and the guest waste no time in indulging in a spontaneous and pleasant interaction; at other times, the whole dialog is contrived, stressful, and unimaginative, and both the host and the guest feel ill at ease.

Structure: The interviewer and interviewee usually determine the parameters of the interview by determining the "taboo" areas and by indicating the topics and the depth of the conversation. If the only purpose of the interview is to elicit speech, the interviewer determines the topics, the areas of language that he/she wants to record (phonology, lexicon, etc.), and the scope of the corpus to be gathered.

Face-to-Face Interaction: Both the interviewer and the interviewee are aware of each other's reactions to statements made during the interview. The researcher can take note of the subtle or not-so-subtle body language, grimaces, or gestures that will contribute to a better understanding of the data provided verbally.

Cultural Specificity: The researcher belongs to a cultural group; the interviewee belongs to a cultural group that might or might not be the same as that of the researcher. The researcher needs to be aware of the social and linguistic behavior of the interviewee's linguistic community. According to Black and Champion (p. 357), "every kind of research technique is applied in culture-specific contexts." This fact is of great importance when it comes to analyzing the linguistic interaction (conversation) between a researcher and an interviewee who belong to different cultural groups. As we are all aware, the researcher usually tends to analyze the social behavior of the interviewee in terms of the researcher's social and linguistic background, rather than with respect to its own value and relevance.

The Purposes of Interviewing

The interview as a method of research can serve several purposes.

The main purpose of the interview is to capture the immediate response of an individual to a set of questions being asked about a certain event: the President of the U.S.A. being asked about the national economy, the Premier of the U.S.S.R. being asked about Soviet citizens' right to emigrate, the Pope being asked to address the issue of nuclear arms proliferation.

A second purpose of the interview is to explore new approaches, new views of the social environment. An excellent example of this function of the interview is the ABC "Nightline" news program during which the interviewer, stationed in Washington, can discuss issues with people all over the world through a "conference" telecommunication via satellite.

A third purpose of the interview is to probe. Very often politicians will make misleading statements

intended to please or appease a certain interest group. A member of the mass media might pick up the issue and try to get a more specific answer, and perhaps a statement of commitment, by probing the politician's sincerity or honesty.

A fourth purpose of the interview is to organize a corpus of linguistic data that may be available for analysis and verification of findings.

A fifth purpose of the interview is to provide data for purposes of replication of interview methodology used in previous studies.

A sixth purpose of the interview is to provide information to make predictions, inferences, and generalizations concerning linguistic behavior of a certain individual who might be chosen as a representative of a linguistic community.

Types of Interviews

Interviews can be classified as unstructured or structured.

Unstructured: In an unstructured interview, the interviewer addresses the topic in a casual manner without any specific order or level of intensity in the questioning. There are no restrictions as to length of the interview or constraints about topics that should or should not be addressed.

Unstructured interviews offer a number of advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

Spontaneity: The interviewer and the interviewee have freedom to change the subject, to extend the discussion about a certain topic of interest to both or to one of them. Because of this, the unstructured

interview is usually a more spontaneous technique for data elicitation than is a structured interview.

Flexibility: The interlocutors are free to change or drop topics as deemed necessary.

Variety: The interlocutors can tackle a large number of topics without feeling restricted to any particular one.

Objectivity: Neither the interviewer nor the interviewee has the opportunity to pursue a personal bias on the topic at hand, since the other member can contradict or change the topic as soon as he/she deems it necessary.

Disadvantages:

Lack of Comparability of Data: Since the two people may discuss a large number of topics with various degrees of intensity, it is rather difficult to establish criteria to compare data obtained from an unstructured interview to data previously obtained.

Lack of Reliability Criteria: As a result of the lack of comparability, it is difficult to establish reliability criteria to determine the value of data for future replication studies.

Lack of Selectivity: Both interlocutors may spend all of the time discussing a topic or a number of topics completely unrelated to the original topic that brought them together in the first place.

Difficulty in Data Coding: Since the two people may have discussed a large number of topics, the task of designing codes for topics, sequences, time, space, and other types of data becomes increasingly difficult. Also, coding becomes difficult since some topics discussed during the interview might not lend

themselves to codification in a pre-designed coding system.

Structured: An interview can be highly structured, thus enabling the interviewer to control a number of factors such as topics, length of responses, and qualifications of potential interviewees.

Structure can be brought to the interview in order to control the following variables:

Potential Interviewees

Setting

Topics

Hierarchy and Sequence of Questions

Range of Spontaneous Responses

Determining Taboos

Length of Interview

Potential Interviewees: Once an event has taken place, the interviewer or a person in the line of command determines who is to be interviewed. For example, during the Falkland/Malvinas war between England and Argentina, news media interviewed people from both countries and leaders from various Latin American and European countries. Very little effort was made to interview residents of the islands who were vacationing or travelling in Argentina. It would have been embarrassing if they had made statements against the position of the country where the interview was taking place.

Setting: The interviewer determines where the interview is to take place. In some cases, because of security reasons, an interview will take place in a secret place, e.g., Yaser Arafat being interviewed during

the Israel/Lebanon war. At other times, an interview may be conducted at the place of residence of the interviewee, e.g., the Pope being interviewed at Castel Gandolfo. In some cases, when the voice of the interviewee is to be kept on tape for posterity, the interview may be conducted in a studio with special equipment and appropriate acoustics.

If researchers need to record the voice of a disappearing racial stock living in Siberia or in Patagonia, then they will have to travel to those places in order to interview those individuals in their natural milieu.

Topics: When politicians are being interviewed, they usually indicate what topics they do not want addressed during the interview. During election times, politicians have systematically requested not to be asked questions dealing with issues such as sex education in the schools and other controversial matters.

As a matter of deference and respect, most journalists avoid the issue of the priesthood for women when they interview the Pope about contempory issues. Researchers, on the other hand, would be thrilled at the opportunity of asking that type of question not only of the Pope, but of other religious leaders.

It is a rather simple task for a male researcher to ask a male informant about his sex preferences; it might be a completely different story if the topic were addressed while the informant is in front of his family.

Hierarchy and Sequence of Questions: The interviewer might like to organize questions so that they are not threatening to the interviewee. Several possible approaches could be considered: (1) from easy to difficult, (2) from concrete to abstract, (3) from simple to controversial, and (4) from fact-finding to opinion-seeking. Each one of these categories provides the interviewer with a large number of possible questions to be asked.

Range of Spontaneous Responses: Often political figures tend to digress, i.e., to use whatever question is being asked as a vehicle to go back to their pet subject. In everyday conversation, a word, a sentence, or an idiom used by a member of the social group may trigger a memory of an unrelated event, and the interviewee might start a completely new subject by saying something like: "By the way, what you just said reminds me of..." The interviewer must be aware of these conversational detours and must bring the conversation back to the topic at hand.

Determining Taboos: A researcher needs to be quite familiar with the social/linguistic taboos existing in the cultural/linguistic community of the interviewee: What taboos are common among men or women of a certain cultural group? What taboos are present in conversations between a man and a woman? Between an adolescent and an adult? Between father and daughter? Between mother and son? Between members of the family and strangers? The interviewer must determine the kinds of taboos that may inhibit or ruin an interview.

Length of an Interview: When interviewing an infant, five minutes is too much; when interviewing the storyteller and the bearer of the oral tradition of a nonliterate community, one hour might be too little. Thus, the interviewer needs to use his/her professional judgement and common sense to determine how long the interview will last.

It is well known in linguistic research that when an informant starts getting tired of answering questions, his/her speech becomes stilted, his/her language becomes unnatural, and his/her vocabulary becomes far-fetched and fakey. At that point the interviewer should terminate the interview. If courtesy or other social constraints prevent the researcher from stopping the interview, then he/she should not use that segment of the interview for language analysis.

Structured interviews offer a number of advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

Control: The interviewer can control the content, the context, and the intensity of the conversation.

Flexibility: The interviewer enjoys a wide range of possible approaches to the topic being discussed.

Rapidity: Since the interviewee is prevented from digressing from a predetermined topic, a greater amount of data is obtained in a shorter period of time.

Precision: Once the interviewer and the interviewee have agreed upon the topic to be discussed, both questions and answers can be precise and directly address the issue.

Focus: The interlocutors know what the discussion will be about, so they can concentrate on that particular subject without wasting time trying to outguess each other.

Disadvantages:

Validity: How valid are the responses? To what extent is the interviewer being spontaneous in his/her speech? To what extent is the information factual or fictitious?

Variability: Two different interviewers may get completely opposite information from the same informant. Here, personality, ability to establish rapport, credibility, and other personality traits of the interviewers will make the difference.

One interviewer may record divergent types of information at different times because of changes in

mood, attitude, interest, and other motivational factors. A researcher interviewing an informant at the beginning of a three-year longitudinal study might be much more enthusiastic than one interviewing an informant at the end of a cycle after having been informed that the research project will be discontinued.

Trust: What happens when an informant does not trust the interviewer? It is obvious that much valuable information will be withheld.

> The nature of responses generally depends upon the trust developed early in the relationship, status differences, differential perception, and interpretations placed on questions and responses, the control exercised by the interviewer, and so forth (Cicourel, 1964, p. 99).

Constraints

Using the interview as a tool for research also offers some legal, moral, and ethical issues that need to be addressed. First of all, the interviewee should be informed of the purposes of the interview, the types of questions to be asked, the right of the individual not to answer certain questions, the degree of dissemination of the data, and the confidentiality of the reporting.

In some cases, it is necessary for the individual to sign an "informed consent" statement, in which he/she states that the researcher has informed him/her of the various implications of the research effort. When interviews take place at a school site and many children are being interviewed, the school administration can get a standard authorization from all the parents and then act "in loco parentis," that is to say, representing the parents in order to protect the rights of the children. For example, a child who might have agreed to be interviewed might refuse to do so the day the interview

is to take place. The school administration then should respect the child's "right of dissent" and excuse him/her from a task that would have become extremely unpleasant should the child have been forced to answer questions.

When small children are asked questions about their environment, their daily routine, their parents, etc., they often relate to the researcher some rather intimate and potentially embarrassing family events. It is up to the professionalism, integrity, and common sense of the researcher to change the subject without offending the child and to erase that section of the tape if the session was being recorded.

The courts are full of legal actions initiated by individuals who feel they have been misquoted and their statements misrepresented during an interview which was to be used as the basis for a publication.

So, integrity and common sense!

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CHAPTER FIVE

ELICITATION TECHNIQUES FOR SPONTANEOUS SPEECH

> Facts do not simply lie around waiting to be picked up. Facts must be carved out of the continuous web of ongoing reality, must be observed within a specific frame of reference, must be measured with precision, must be observed where they can be related to other relevant facts. All of this involves "methods" (Rose, 1965, p. 11).

This chapter will deal with elicitation techniques which are designed to encourage children to express themselves spontaneously with a minimum of prodding on the part of the adults gathering the language sample. These techniques have been compiled from the specialized literature and have been refined and field tested in order to maximize their effectiveness.

To elicit truly spontaneous speech from children, adult researchers must provide stimulus for speech without guiding or restricting the production of that speech. The situation should be one in which the adults, rather than modeling, facilitate, rather than questioning, respond. Unless a long process of familiarization is undertaken prior to taping, the children's speech will be inhibited and/or altered by their awareness of the presence of an adult.

With children whose dominant language is other than English, a directed interview in English can undermine and weaken an already shaky confidence in their ability to manipulate the less familiar tongue. It may also increase the frequency of errors they make in speaking and, consequently, decrease the reliability of the sample. The ideal situation is one where the adults, after having structured an environment that inherently prompts conversation, are able to remove themselves from the role of interviewers and put themselves in the role of listeners.

Providing children with manipulatives (e.g., toys, art materials, etc.) is one way of structuring such an environment. However, this method may not produce an adequate sample of the child's language for analysis. In play situations, especially with younger children, much of the language produced often will be subvocalized and will consist mostly of sounds, isolated words, and phrases. In order to avoid ending up with this type of minimal or inaudible sample, speaking should be made purposeful relative to play; that is, activities should be structured so as to require the child to verbalize. For example, the commercially prepared game called "Password" is one which rewards those players who are able to communicate most effectively. Team members must give their partners verbal clues to help them figure out a particular word to gain points in the game. In much the same way, children can be motivated to put their language capabilities to maximum use in the process of explaining something to someone when they have a good reason to do so.

The pages that follow present specific techniques for spontaneous language production. The techniques are classified as "structured" and "unstructured." Even though the classification is rather arbitrary, its main purpose is to convey the idea that in the "structured" language interaction the researcher sets the topic, the tone, and the intensity of the conversation and that in the "unstructured" language interaction the child is

encouraged to express ideas, emotions, and feelings in a freer manner with a minimum of disruption or participation on the part of the researcher.

The samples provided at the end of each technique are unedited speech samples from children in the National, Chula Vista, and Sweetwater school districts in Southern California. The interviewers are the co-authors of this monograph.

Unstructured Techniques

Probe

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is prompted to respond to a question from the interviewer. The question, or probe, may be closed* or open.**

Application: Use a closed probe to elicit a "yes/no" response or other short response.

Use an open probe to elicit an essay-type response. Ask a question that requires the interviewee to give an opinion or to speculate. For example, a "leading" or "indirect" question can provoke the interviewee to extend discussion on a topic.

Characteristics:

Strengths: The probe, if employed on all levels of questioning, is a very flexible technique. Not only simple responses reflecting thinking processes at the factual level can be obtained but also very sophisticated responses reflecting the inferential level.

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*Also called a simple or naming probe.
**Also called an elaboration probe.

Weaknesses: With interviewees who tend to be self-conscious or non-verbal, the probe can lead to an uncomfortable, dead-end conversation. When used as the only technique in an interview, it limits the interviewer's role to purely that of a questioner. Unless the topic addressed in the probe is significant to the interviewee, the response may be sparse and of poor quality.

Appropriateness: This technique can be adapted to suit both adults and children. Open probes, however, will be less useful with younger children or with language deficient children and adults.

Sample: Closed Probe:

Interviewer (I): And your dad...He cooks at a restaurant?

Paty (P): Uh huh.

I: Where?

P: At the Anthony's on E Street.

I: Does he cook at home?

P: Sometimes.

I: Does he like to cook?

P: I don't know.

I: You never asked him?

P: No!

I: Do you cook better that he does, or does he cook better than you do?

P: I think he cooks better than I do.

I: Well, is he teaching you?

P: No.

I: Really? Well, who's teaching you?

P: Nobody.

Sample: Open Probe:

Interviewer (I): What happened?

Paty (P): We had to move to another house...in another state...to United States of America.

I: And?

P: And I feel kind of sad and happy because...

. . . . .

Interviewer (I): What about you? Hm? Eh?

José (J): Nothing. I didn't feel nothing.

I: Why not? How come Paty felt so much and you didn't feel anything?

J: I don't know.

P: Because he only...He went to the school but for only three years and I went for six years to school.

. . . . .

I: Why do you think it bothered you so much?

P: I don't know. You feel strange...when you move to another state, country, whatever.

I: Was it because of the fact that...that you feel that you are alone?

P: Yeah, because you need a lot of time to make friends, and, when you change you have to start all over again.

I: Do you think it's less difficult for a younger person to change?

P: Yeah, because, um...you forget...um...not your friends, but...forget more easily than older people do.

I: Paty, would you be willing, or, how would you feel about going back to Mexico again?

P: Now I don't want to go back.

Ricardo (R): And start all over!

P: Yeah. I don't want to start all over again...

Description

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is prompted to tell the interviewer about some object in the environment.

Application: Use a variety of stimuli, e.g., toys, pictures, to focus and hold the interviewee's attention. With a young child, direct him/her to engage in play with a toy, or play with the child yourself. With an adolescent or an adult, show a picture or photograph. Ask the interviewee to tell you about the stimulus. If description is scanty, probe to elicit details of color, shape, dimension.

The interviewee may also be asked to tell about visible objects in the surrounding environment. Or, he/she may be asked to tell about objects without the aid of any immediate stimuli. For instance, ask a child to describe the contents of his/her bedroom at home. Ask an adolescent or adult to describe a favorite possession.

Characteristics:

Strengths: Stimuli can be varied to assess the interviewee's control of vocabulary in any area of language. Can show ability to describe fine distinctions and details.

Weaknesses: May produce a very small language sample.

Appropriateness: This technique can be adapted for use with both adults and children.

Sample:

Interviewer: José Luis, please tell me about the picture you have in front of you.

José: I see that a car has a flat tire and the man is fixing it and the police is talking to him. And two ladies talking. An old...And two men of the car are, yelling at him. And a boy wants to cross the street. And two ladies are getting down of the bus and...A family wants to cross the street. And...The man of the store is watching out the door...And...The, the man of the bank is watching through the window to see what's happening. And... And the other police is, um, directing the traffic... And...And a (inaudible) The dentist is...The dentist is watching through the window to see what's happening outside. And a couple is watching too. And...There is a...a man selling books, newspapers, um. And all the cars are...mm...horning. And...That's it.

(Based on visual in Heaton, J. B. Composition though pictures. London: Longman Group Limited, 1966, p. 15.)

Narration

Definition: A technique in which the subject is prompted to tell the interviewer about a sequence of events.

Application:

Interviewing a young child:

Engage him/her in play with manipulatives, and then ask him/her to tell what is happening in the pretend play situation;

Show an animated cartoon feature minus the soundtrack, then replay it and ask the child to fill in as storyteller; or

Provide a wordless picture book, or a comic strip with the dialog deleted, and ask the child to tell the story.

Interviewing a teenager or an adult:

Show a sequence of related pictures on a theme of interest and ask him/her to tell what is happening, or

Ask him/her to relate a familiar folk tale or an amusing personal anecdote to you.

Characteristics:

Strengths: Allows the interviewee to respond to stimuli uninterrupted by interviewer probes. Higher quality, attractive stimuli can produce extensive language samples.

Weaknesses: Children may be disinterested in narrating their play actions. Also, narration may be inaudible because of children's movement during play.

Appropriateness: This technique is equally appropriate to use with children or adults. However, very young children may evince difficulty relating events in proper sequence.

Sample:

Ricardo (R): It start that Sir Andrew was taking a shower and he got out and he was...

Interviewer (I): He was what?

R: He was...

I: What's he do after he takes a shower? Well, go on to the next picture then.

R: Then he was putting disoderant.

Jose (J): Disoderant!

I: Come on. Go picture by picture.

R: And he was putting deodorant on his...his what?

I: His...his arm? Under his arms?

R: Under his arms. Then he was drying his hair and he dry his tail, too. Then he was shining his shoes. Then he put on his underwears. Then he put on...Then he put on his shirt. Then he picked a suit to put on too. And he got a hat but it didn't fit with his ears up. Then he put it on the middle of his ears but he didn't like it. Then he tied his ears up and he put on the hat but he didn't like it. Then he made holes on the hat and he liked it that way when he put it on. Lemme see. Then he was walking out and he looked at the mir...mirrorier...mir... mirrorier... He...Then he walked out and he was looking at the mirroriers and...And he was just looking to one side. Then...Then he look at a pastry

shop and there was a holed and he fall in it. Then there...Then heard then two bears and an ambulance came and put 'im on the...How do you call? on the bed. Then they took him to the hospital and they put him on the bed and he was looking out...

. . . . .

Then he came out of the hospital with on crutches and a broken foot. Then a strong wind came and blew his head, his hat off. The hat went across the street and he followed and a...a car almost run over him. And the car stop and the car of the back crash with the one on the front and he kept following his hat. Then the hat went where a pig was painting. Then...Then the, the pig, the pig felled down in the paint too. And the pig got mad but he got his hat back and he was happy. Then he was looking at the mirroriers... mirroriers... mirroriers and there was a...peeled banana. And he didn't fall.

(Based on Winter, P. Sir Andrew. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1980.)

Interpretation

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is prompted to tell the interviewer the meaning of a stimulus.

Application:

Interviewing a child:

Show a picture that depicts an intriguing or fantastical situation and ask the child to tell about it, or

Read or tell a story to the child and then use an open probe to elicit an interpretation of the motives behind the character's actions.

Interviewing a teenager or an adult:

Show a reproduction of a work of art or play a recording of a piece of music, and ask the interviewee about the artist's or composer's intended message.

Characteristics:

Strengths: Allows for variety of depth of responses. Requires higher level thinking.

Weaknesses: Both children and adults may vary considerably in their ability to project and interpret. Also, some stimuli may provide a context outside the realm of a younger or less sophisticated child's experience, and thus may provoke little or no response.

Appropriateness: This technique may not be appropriate for younger children who are still functioning at a literal level of interpretation. It has been shown to be highly appropriate for teenagers and adults.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): Looking at that picture, tell me what you think is happening.

José (J): I think that the monster grab a young girl and he's give...giving her a lot kisses. Well I think...because when a boy gives a girl a kiss they raise their leg up.

I: But why would...why would the monster want to kiss a girl?

J: Because...the monster like her.

I: So you think she's not trying to escape?

J: Yes. I think.

I: What do you think is going to happen after ...after that?

J: That the monster is going to kill her ...if it's monster.

(Based on visual in Cornejo, R. J. Bilingualism: Study of the lexicon of the five-year-old Spanish-speaking children of Texas, doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1969, p. 203.)

Sample:

Interviewer (I): Ricardo, you read that story, "The Dog and His Meat." What do you think...you think about that story? What do you think the message of that story is? What's the point of it?

Ricardo (R): That the dog doesn't know that he can reflect, reflect himself on the water.

. . . . .

I: Do you think the dog was greedy?

. . . . .

I: Can't you give her an example of somebody that's greedy?

José (J): Like if I take...Like if I had something right now like a marble and then...no, like a ice cream and I take it away from you and I'm not going to eat it right now. I want to save it for another day so I don't have to buy.

I: So what...what does a greedy person do? Or what does a greedy animal do?

R: Wants to have more...like meat that he doesn't need.

(Based on story in Kottmeyer, W. & Ware, K. The dog and his meat. Conquests in reading. St. Louis, MO: Webster Division, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962, p. 80.)

Expression

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is prompted to react personally to a stimulus.

Application:

Interviewing a young child:

Present several different toys and ask him/her to choose one and tell why; or

Tell a story involving conflict and ask the child how he/she feels about the story's resolution.

Interviewing a teenager or an adult:

Ask the interviewee to recall and relate to you a very meaningful incident from his/her life. Then use open and indirect probes to elicit his/her feelings about the incident; or

Show a reproduction of a work of art, or play a recording of a piece of music, and ask the interviewee to tell what feelings were invoked in him/her by the stimulus.[10]

Characteristics:

Strengths: Encourages spontaneous, personal interaction between interviewer and interviewee; creates good rapport and climate.

Weaknesses: Children, even teenagers, may have difficulty formulating and expressing an opinion. Their responses may be limited. Adults, on the other hand, may hesitate for fear of expressing the "wrong" opinion.

Appropriateness: This technique is more suited to adults and teenagers, because they are better able than children to recognize and identify feelings and emotions.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): Has there ever been a time you were embarrassed...because maybe you had to talk in front of somebody and you didn't know the words?

José (J): When we were having book reports I didn't know what to do because I didn't know...know English. They tell me to read the book loud so everybody can hear it. It was about Christopher Columbus. I didn't know how to say that, but now I know.

I: So tell me what happened. You had to get up in front of the class, or what?

J: Yes.

I: How did you feel?

J: Miserable.

I: What, What...Did you get up and stand there with the book?

J: Yes, a girl came and helped me.

. . . . .

I: And when it was finished, how did you feel?

J: Miserable.

I: How long did you feel that way?

J: Not that miserable because it was almost a lot of people that didn't know how to speak English, so I said, I'm not the only one.

I: How do you feel about it now that you know more English.

J: Happy.

. . . . .

I: Did you have anything like that? You never get embarrassed about anything?

Paty (P): Yes, you did. When you cross the border and they ask you questions.

Ricardo (R): I answered them.

P: No, but when you didn't know English and they say, "What's your name?" and you didn't know what to answer?

I: How did you feel when he didn't know how to answer?

P: I don't know because I...I didn't know what...what they saying?

I: No...None of you spoke any English at all?

P: No! And they say, "How are you?" and things...simple things...and...and I didn't say anything.

I: How did you feel?

P: Dummy!

I: How about you?

J: They never ask me.

P: Yes they do!

J: Now they ask me but when we pass they didn't ask me nothing.

I: Did you feel afraid...that they might ask you?

P: Yeah, I was. "Please don't ask me a question!"

I: What about you?

R: (Shrugs)

I: What's that mean? How'd you feel? When you go to cross the border now how do you feel?

P: Scared.

J: Not me.

P: Yeah, I scared.

Explication

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is prompted to transmit to the interviewer information about a process or procedure.

Application:

Interviewing a child:

Ask the child to give you verbal directions on how to arrive at a particular site in the neighborhood from his/her house;

Provide a street map and ask the child to tell you how to travel from one point to another point on the map (provide picture maps for poor or non-readers);

Provide popsicle sticks and glue, and ask the child to show you how to construct a toy building;

Provide an origami kit. (Colored papers plus picture directions are usually included.) Have the child refer to the picture directions in the kit while he/she practices constructing figures. Then ask him/her to teach you to make a figure; or

Provide paper and pencil plus picture directions for drawing animals or other figures. ("How to Draw: Step-by-Step" instruction books can be purchased in art supply stores, or prepared by

interviewer.) Have the child refer to the picture directions in the book while he/she practices drawing figures. Then ask him/her to teach you to draw a figure.

Interviewing a teenager or an adult:

Ask the interviewee to teach you a craft or a hobby at which he/she is skilled.

Characteristics:

Strengths: Especially good for reticent or shy children because attention is focused on the task at hand rather than on answering the interviewer's questions. The interviewer may ask for clarification on occasion but can generally allow the explanation to proceed uninterrupted.

Weaknesses: Children may become so engaged in task that they may forget to "teach" the interviewer. Also, they may become perplexed by not having the linguistic sophistication necessary to be able to explain difficult steps in a procedure.

Appropriateness: This technique is equally appropriate with children and adults. With pairs or small groups of children, it works very well if one child assumes the role of teacher with the rest as students.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): O.K. You tell me, step by step, you know, what's the first thing I do.

Paty (P): O.K. You draw two parallel...parallel lines...two...O.K...Then you draw a line over the two parallel...

I: Uh huh.

P: ¡Oy! Oh...

I: What do I do next?

P: Oh. ¿Como se llama? Well, lemme see.

I: Um kay.

P: Instead of the...Instead...O.K. You draw like a triangle over the two parallel lines.

I: O.K. Alright. So. Triangle. Then you draw a straight line under the two parallel lines...under...

P: O.K. Like...um...hm...O.K. Two parallel lines.

I: Like that?

P: Ah! Esperame. More bigger.

I: What do you mean, "More bigger?" How can a line be bigger?

P: Well, lemme see. More long?

I: O.K. How long?

P: Well, lemme see.

I: Where do I go? How far? I mean here? To the edge of the paper?

P: No.

I: Well, like?

P: ¡Esperame!

. . . . .

P: O.K. You draw the line in the center but...the ends of the line has to be outside of the parallel lines. ¡Ay!

I: Outside of the parallel lines?

P: Ah huh.

I: This is right then? Just to here?

P: Ah huh.

I: So forget this?

P: Ah...Phew.

I: O.K. So just outside of the parallel lines.

P: Ah huh.

I: Just beyond. Just beyond.

P: Just beyond.

I: O.K.

P: Then you draw inside the triangles five circles. Si?

I: Um hum. Um hum. Why are you laughing?

P: You draw a star on the top of the triangle.

I: What is this?

P: It's a Christmas tree.

(Based on visual in Appendix, p. 104.)

Elaboration

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is prompted to expand on a given topic.

Application: Ask the interviewee to elaborate on a topic already touched upon in the course of the interview or on a new topic.[13] Use both closed and open probes to sustain discussion.

Characteristics:

Strengths: If the topic is of significance to the interviewee, he/she may want to elaborate at length, and a plentiful language sample will be produced.

Weaknesses: If a particular topic is beyond the interviewee's linguistic or cognitive level of sophistication, elaboration will fail as a technique for eliciting speech. The interviewer needs to have some familiarity with the interviewee to obtain more than a very minimal elaboration.

Appropriateness: This technique can be equally appropriate with children and adults as long as the interviewer individualizes his/her choice of topic to each individual. Topics for elaboration should be identified on the basis of their apparent interest to the interviewee as determined either by the immediately preceding conversation or by prior knowledge about the interviewee. This technique is particularly appropriate to determine control of language and thought at more sophisticated levels.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): If you had three wishes - anything you wanted in the world - what would you wish for?

José (J): A whole house full of arcades.

I: O.K.

J: And a '56, a car, and....and...

Ricardo (R): A convertible. A bike.

J: And...And a big ice cream store, a big one!.....
..... Can I change something?

I: Yeah. What do you want to change?

J: The ice cream store.

I: What do you want to change it to?

J: To...that nobody die in the world.

I: That would be one of your three wishes? Did you have somebody die before?:

J: Yes.

I: Who?

J: My uncle.

I: When was this?

J: No my uncle. Yes my uncle.

R: And grandpa, grandpa.

I: Grandpa? Your grandpa?

Paty (P): No, no, that's not true. Your uncle, not ankle.

R: And also grandpa.

P: What grandpa?

I: What uncle died?

R: My father.

J: My father's...

P: Ay! You don't even remember.

I: Your father's brother?

J: But we didn't...were born, I think so.

I: So he died before you were born?

J: Yes.

I: Well then you didn't feel anything.

P: I start to cry though.

Pantomime

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is prompted to respond to a pantomime. Depending on the type of pantomime, the response may be descriptive or narrative.

Application: Use pantomime to elicit descriptive language. Act out a pantomime that conveys a single significance, e.g., pantomime someone crying or someone brushing his/her teeth, and ask the interviewee to describe to you what is being represented.

Use pantomime to elicit narrative language. Act out a pantomime that shows a sequence of actions, e.g., someone waking up in the morning, and ask the interviewee to describe to you each succeeding action. If the interviewee is receptive, ask him/her to perform an original pantomime and to simultaneously describe his/her actions to you.

To encourage verbalization, choose subjects to pantomime that allow for interpretation. For instance, pantomime different emotions or unexpected or puzzling sequences of actions.

Characteristics:

Strengths: Because it is entertaining, pantomime tends to create a more informal atmosphere and to encourage the use of spontaneous language.

Weaknesses: Because of the representational nature of pantomime, a limited number of topics can be introduced. Also, the language sample produced will be limited in size and in sophistication unless other techniques (probes, interpretation, expression) are used in conjunction with pantomime.

Appropriateness: Some adults and older children may feel uncomfortable with this technique. Conversely, however, it may be appropriate with interviewees who respond less readily to more traditional interview techniques such as the probe.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): One word. What's the emotion I feel?

Ricardo (R): You feel in love!

José (J): You feel...um...How do you say...Aburrido?

Paty (P)/R: Bored.

J: Unhappy.

P: In love?

I: How do you say what he said?

J: Boring.

I: Do I feel boring or do I feel bored?

R/J: Bored.

I: O.K. I feel bored because what I am doing is boring. Why? Because I'm doing nothing.

. . . . .

I: O.K. Tell me what I'm feeling.

J: You are crying. You are afraid of... afraid of something.

R: Scared. Scared. Scared.

J: Somebody insult you?

R: Hurt your feelings.

J: Ashamed.

. . . . .

I: I want you to watch what he's doing and tell me what he's doing. He's going to do something about sports.

J: Being a home run and he didn't catch it. You didn't.

I: Watch. Watch.

J: He threw it to first base and it's an out. He running. He doing dumb thing. I don't know why. Another one? Now soccer? What...the bathroom?

I: We're lost. What are you doing?

R: Now I take the ball and I made a home run and I run. Then I get to the bench and sit down.

. . . . .

P: Es de la casa.

R: Vacuuming. Brooming...Brooming.

J: Mopping.

R: Brooming.

J: You're squishing the mop.

R: Mopping...Mopping...Vacuuming...Dusting...Putting water on the plants. Calling for the telephone. Turn on the T. V. Sit down and watch and get excited and to get scared. Go to sleep. Make some popcorn and stretch out. Fly! Killing a fly. Playing the tape recorder. Playing...Grabando...

J/R: Recording.

R: Opening the curtains and look out. Cutting plants. Oh! Shining them. Hungry. Bread. Sandwich. Eat. Bite.

Role-Playing

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is prompted to utilize the language appropriate to a particular social role and social situation.

Application: Suggest an imaginary situation and ask the interviewee to assume the role of a character in the situation. Engage him/her in dialog. Choose problematic or uncomfortable situations that promote prolonged conversation.

Interviewing a child:

Your parent/teacher has caught you misbehaving;

You are fighting with a brother, sister, or friend; or

Your teacher gets sick and you have to take charge of the class until the substitute arrives.

Interviewing a teenager or an adult:

You want to invite someone out on a date;

You are trying to clear up a misunderstanding over an order with a waiter, waitress, or sales representative; or

You want to apologize to a friend for losing something you borrowed, forgetting a meeting, or losing your temper.

Alternately, ask the interviewee to recreate a scene from his/her own life.[14]

Characteristics:

Strengths: Role-playing places the interviewee in the position of being an active participant in the interview situation. The interviewee has to "think on his/her feet," and a more spontaneous language sample is produced. Young people often enjoy playing the role of older authority figures.

Weaknesses: Interviewees unfamiliar with the concept of improvisation may experience difficulty at first.

Appropriateness: This technique, with practice, can be successfully used with school-age children, teenagers, and adults.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): Excuse me.

Paty (P): May I help you?

I: Yes ma'm. I purchased this shirt here and I took it home and I washed it and it shrank and it doesn't fit.

P: How long...About how long did you buy it?

I: Last week. I have the receipt right here. Would you like to see it?

P: Yes.

I: Well?

P: Can I see the shirt?

I: Yes, here it is. You can see it's three sizes too small now. Well, what are you going to do about it?

P: This shirt has a pa... This shirt in the tag it say that you can only return it within three days of your...

I: Well I didn't wash it until a week after I'd bought it!

P: But you bought it a week ago.

I: Well, I'd like to see your supervisor.

P: O.K. Just a minute.

José (J): May I help you? Yes, ma'm. What's the trouble?

I: I bought this shirt here a week ago and I washed it and it has shrunk three sizes. It is now the size of my son. And this woman says she won't give me my money back.

J: Yes, but it says in the tag that you can only return it after three days.

I: But it shrank! I can't wear it now.

P: But it also...Don't you read...um...

J: Don't you read the...the tag?

P: We don't refund.

J: We don't refund.

I: Well, what kind of a business is this?

J: A store.

I: Well, I'm not coming to shop here anymore. You won't give me my money back?

J: No!

P: No!

I: Well, I'm not coming here and I'm going to tell all my friends not to come here either! Good-bye!

J: Hey, just wait a minute, lady! Wait!

(Based on Kettering, J. C. Developing communicative competence: Interaction activities in English as a second language. University of Pittsburgh: The University Center for International Studies, 1975, pp. 30-32.)

Games/Problem-Solving

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is prompted to verbalize the solution to a problem which may involve verbal or manual manipulation.

Application:

Interviewing a child:

Play rhyming and/or counting games with the child,[15]

Present a visual problem such as "What's Wrong With This Picture?" and ask the child to identify and describe the inconsistencies, or

Provide a manipulative game or activity and ask the child to describe it.

Interviewing a teenager or an adult:

Play familiar popular guessing games with the interviewee, such as "Twenty Questions" or "Animal-Vegetable-Mineral?",[16] or commercially published word games such as "Password;" or,

Provide a novel game or object, allow time for the interviewee to deduce its workings, and then ask him/her to describe it to you.

Characteristics:

Strengths: Creates an informal atmosphere and induces spontaneous language by directing attention away from the interview towards the game or problem.

Weaknesses: A small language sample may result if the interviewee tends to demonstrate more than verbalize the solution to the game or problem.

Appropriateness: This technique is well suited to children, teenagers, and adults, particularly to competitive personalities. It can work well with groups.

Sample:

Interviewer(I): Will you look at this picture, please?

Paty (P): What's wrong.

I: What's wrong with it? Tell me some things about it.

P: Oh, everything! O.K. There are two boys rollerskate...rollerskating in the sidewalk but one has...O.K. The girl has roller skating and the boy has ice skating?

I: Yeah.

P: So that is wrong. O.K. Fish. O.K. O.K. And there is a store...a fish store. O.K. And there are seven ham and turkey and chicken and... um...bolona. I don't know how do you say it. O.K. So that is wrong in that store. Ah! And I seen a horse. A horse? Oy! I seen the face of a horse looking out the window. O.K. And "one-way?" And I seen too a sign that said "one-way" and it is pointing up? Well.

I: Well, it's going to heaven.

P: Heaven! ¡Ya que sea esta ahi! Oh and I seen a cat that...¡Oy!...that has eyeglasses. And there's a man that is wearing. ¡Oy! O.K. In one leg he's wearing a pant and the other one he's wearing a short? Well.

I: Um hum.

P: And there is...And there is a lady watering instead...Instead of watering the flowers he's watering another lady!.....Ay,

no se. It's a stop sign? Is that how you say? Esperame. No. No. ¿Como se llama?

I: Mm hm.

P: A signal stop?

I: The other way around.

P: ¡Ay! A stop signal?

I: Remember in...that in English the adjective goes before the noun.

P: Oh yeah.

I: So what kind of a sign is it?

P: Stop...Stop sign?

I: But, is this a sign...like that...or is it a light?

P: Oh! Yo me est...

I: So what kind of light is it?

P: Light stop?

I: What...What kind of...Adjective before the noun. What kind of light is it?

P: Um. Stop light?

I: Yep, it's a stoplight.

P: O.K. Well, I think it's wrong because it's in the middle of, the middle of the street but not in the street... I mean, in the sidewalk.

(Based on visual in Barbe, W. B. Reading adventures in Spanish and English: Highlights handbook. Columbus, OH: Highlights for Children, Inc., 1977, p. 15.)

Sustained Production

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is asked to produce a stream of uninterrupted language.

Application: Ask the interviewee to recite as many words as possible without stopping, with no restrictions on length of words or topics.

Request the same of the interviewee for connected discourse.

Characteristics:

Strengths: This technique requires the interviewee to associate, or chain ideas, in the language; thus, the quantity of language produced is an indicator of the degree of fluency in the language.

Weaknesses: The interviewer may need to prompt the interviewee in order to maintain the flow of language, which will invalidate the technique as a measure of fluency.

Appropriateness: This technique is appropriate for older children, teenagers, and adults but will produce a limited sample with younger children operating on a concrete level of thinking.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): I want you to say as many words as you can in English without stopping. O.K. Go.

José (J): Car, plant, um, tablecloth, table, red, green, yellow, blue, um, kitchen, picture, fruit, dog, pad, schoolhouse, plant, tree, um, um, person, rug, um, book, tape recorder, tape, um, person, underwears, shirt, pant, socks, fingers, nails, um, nails, um, shoes, feet, tongue, eyes, chin, hair, um, lips, um, watch, mm, elbow, glass, teeth, nose, eyes, eyes, uh,

pic...No, I said that already...refrigerator, um, door, um, um, roof, roof, coffee, paper, paper, um, curtains, windows, um, pencil, button, mm...

I: What about things that you can't see?

J: Germs, air, blood, heart, um.....

I: I want you to keep talking but you can say sentences. You can say phrases, not words alone, but I don't want you to stop. You can talk about anything that's in your mind. I don't care what you talk about.

J: Story?

I: ...Just keep talking. I don't care if you tell a story.

J: O.K. There is a teacher here who is drinking coffee, and she say if she put in the tablecloth it's going to melt. And, and I have here, uh, two boys that I don't know them. I don't know what are they doing in my house. Better keep going...Move...Shush. And I have a house. It's pretty neat, if you like it, and it has a carpet, a television, a sofa, two sofas, um.

I: C'mon, c'mon.

J: A door, windows, and... And I have a neighbor that his house is like blue. They're nice and...

Ricardo (R): They're mice?

J: And I have another neighbors and they're nice too. They're not mice, they're nice. And...I have other neighbors that they're, um, robbers. And... And... The...And I going to be going to junior high school next year and .....
And when I go to play, um, we play marbles, baseball, kickball, um, a lot of things, and, and, and we have a family room and it has a man is coming... A man is coming. And he's building a trastero.

Paraphrase*

Definition: A technique in which the interviewee is asked to express an idea another way.

Application: Ask the interviewee to express an idea differently but without changing or losing any part of the meaning. Key lexical items in the sentence should remain the same.

Characteristics:

Strengths: Quickly pinpoints gaps in linguistic knowledge; specifically, indicates the interviewee's degree of control over the syntactic structures of the language.

Weaknesses: Because paraphrase prohibits elaboration, the sample size will be limited.

Appropriateness: This technique is less appropriate for children who may forget and unintentionally alter the meaning of the sentence in attempting to paraphrase. Teenagers and adults are generally more accurate and more able to paraphrase because of their greater linguistic sophistication.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): The storm frightened the cat and it ran to hide under the table. Say that a different way. Say that a different way.

José (J): The cat had scared of the storm...Went the table.

---

*Also called periphrase.

Ricardo (R): The...The cat got scared of the 'torm...of the storm and ran away.

I: Listen again. The storm frightened the cat and it ran to hide under the table.

J: Got...The cat got scared of the storm and went down the table. The cat went down the table because he got afraid of the storm.

. . . . .

I: If you are frightened alot by something, your hair will turn white. If you're frightened alot by something, your hair will turn white.

J: Your hair will turn white if you're afraid of that thing.

I: If you are frightened alot by something...

R: If you sc...If you are scared, your hair is going to turn white.

J: You will...If you see this thing you...your hair will come white.

I: If you are frightened alot by something, your hair will turn white.

P: You must be afraid of something a lot because your hair is all white.

Structured Techniques

Associative Interrogation

Definition: A technique of eliciting language which utilizes clarification of the previous sentence. Questions are asked to clarify the interviewee's last statement.

Application: Within the context of a conversation, the interviewer utilizes unclear statements to serve as the basis for future questions. The interviewer attempts to have the person clarify elements of the statement, which, in turn, produces more language. The interviewer may ask, "What did you mean by saying the movie was interesting?"

Characteristics:

Strengths: Topics and levels of linguistic structure can be varied. The interviewee will demonstrate: ability to clarify, use of vocabulary, and ability to verbalize abstractions.

Weaknesses: May seem artificial or contrived unless the interviewer generates genuine enthusiasm. Children and teens are especially sensitive to feelings. Most teenagers will have difficulty or will feel uneasy with questions involving clarification if no rapport exists.

Appropriateness: This technique can be used with children, teenagers, and adults.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): What grade are you going to be in next year?

Jennifer (J): First grade.

I: In first grade! And you're ready, aren't you?

J: And Dina was giving me some, and she made some work for me to do.

I: What kind?

J: Um, some words that you got...writing for first grade.

I: Like, what kind of words?

J: Um, like, I don't remember some of them.

. . . . .

Interviewer (I): What was your favorite trip? Which one did you like best?

Joseph (J): Magic Mountain.

I: Tell me about it. What did you do there?

J: I went on this airplane and there was this toy gun and this army gun, and when I pulled something back, and it makes it go high.

I: What was it called?...What do you think it might have been called?

J: I don't know.

Covert Elicitation

Definition: A technique used by an interviewer to stimulate language in a less structured way. The interviewer makes a statement with the purpose of eliciting a question from the interviewee.

Application: The interviewer makes a statement, as if talking to self, e.g., "Boy, am I tired!" and then waits for a question, e.g., "Didn't you sleep well last night?" or "What does your diet consist of?" With younger children the interviewer will find it helpful to increase the use of enthusiasm. For example, the interviewer may say, "Oh boy!" while looking in a box. The child is expected to answer: "What do you have?" or "Can I see, too?" The possibilities are infinite.

Characteristics:

Strengths: Rapport is easily established as both persons are thinking on the same track. The interviewee demonstrates: ability to formulate questions and use of vocabulary.

Weaknesses: Maturity and self-concept have an effect on the interviewee's ability to formulate questions. Younger children are more limited in their expressive capacity to formulate questions.

Appropriateness: This technique is better suited for use with upper elementary children, teenagers, and adults.

Sample:

Interviewer: Boy, am I tired today!

Pedro: What did you do?

Interviewer: Isn't it hot now!

Sara: Yes, we should open the window.

Interviewer: So the Chargers lost last night!

María: They played awful!

Repetition

Definition: A technique used by an interviewer for two purposes:

To allow interviewee to duplicate speech patterns of the investigator.

To allow interviewee to repeat what he/she had said earlier.

Application: The interviewer may work from a text and will verbalize words and statements to be repeated by the interviewee. The interviewee will attempt to parrot the statements as closely as possible.

Another means of utilizing repetition is by asking the interviewee to repeat a statement that he/she had made earlier in the conversation. This could be an opinion or a remark. For example, "Could you please repeat what you said about going to the beach?" "Yes, I said that I like to go surfing on Saturdays." The interviewer can then use repetition again, "Oh, you said that you like to go surfing on Saturdays." "Yes, it's a lot of fun."

Characteristics:

Strengths: There is a high degree of control, as the interviewer may elicit repetition of the desired linguistic structures.

Weaknesses: Language is not in a meaningful context, but rather it exists in isolated segments.

Appropriateness: Older children and adults are more apt to be bored with this technique. Children in kindergarten through third grade will generally maintain interest in this task from 5 to 15 minutes.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): Can you tell again what happened with that lizard, out back?...What you were telling me about before?

Joseph (J): O.K., it was on the side, o.k., there was Dad was chopping the grass, and he there a gray lizard, and it was dead, and he came out...He hit it and it, his stomach and his back started bleeding and then he fell and then started eating it.

Leading Questions

Definition: Questions used by the interviewer to help alleviate disruptions and/or distortions in the naturalness of the spoken response.

Application: The interviewer stages questions which are planned to "break the ice," to allow the flow of natural language, and to avoid distortion of the interviewee's language. With older children, teenagers, and adults, abstract leading questions may be as follows: "How would you feel if you were lost in a forest?" Then ask, "Can you describe what a forest is?"

A leading question can be used to prepare the interviewee for a question related to abstract linguistic concepts. For example, "How many words do you think you know?" Then ask, "What is a word? Can you tell me what a word is?

Characteristics:

Strengths: The interviewer elicits spontaneous utterances and provides for individual diversity in interpretation.

Weaknesses: It is very difficult to alleviate distortions and disruptions in the natural flow of language while in a formal setting.

Appropriateness: This method can be used effectively with both children and adults.

Sample:

Interviewer: How many states are there in the United States?

Ernesto: I don't know...I think...fifty?

Interviewer: What is a state?

Ernesto: Is like a county.

Interviewer: Give me examples.

Ernesto: Guadalajara, California.

Paraphrasing

Definition: A technique of eliciting language in which the interviewee repeats what the interviewer has said but in another way.

Application: The interviewer provides an example of the activity, e.g., "I will say something, and then you'll say the same thing but in a different way. For example, I'll say, 'While he is reading a book, he cannot play the piano.' You could say, 'He cannot play the piano and read a book at the same time,' or 'Because he is reading a book, he cannot play the piano.'

Characteristics:

Strengths: This method is likely to bring forth syntactic structures which the interviewer is not aware of. Also, since the lexical items remain constant, the interviewer can focus his/her attention on structural matters.

Weaknesses: A shy or insecure interviewee may feel self-conscious or under pressure to produce responses.

Appropriateness: This technique is better suited for use with upper grade elementary children, teenagers, and adults.

Sample:

Interviewer: I'm going to say something and then you will say the same thing, but in your own words: My father and my mother are at home.

Leticia: My Dad and my Mom are at home... in the house?

Interviewer: Ese nino me empujo.

Armando: ¡Ese chamaco me pucho!

Closed Questions

Definition: A technique of eliciting language in which the interviewee answers questions which require a "yes" or "no" or a simple response.

Application: The interviewer creates a situation in which the conversation is based on a series of questions which can either be related or unrelated. The depth of the responses is often related to the

amount of rapport established between the two people. The conversation usually begins with a question to "break the ice" which is answered with a brief, culturally relevant statement. For example, the interviewer says, "Hi, Joseph. How are you?" and he may respond, "Fine." The questions continue until enough language has been elicited.

Characteristics:

Strengths: This technique is usually non-threatening to children, as the responses are simple and short.

Weaknesses: Some interviewees feel intimidated or bored by the barrage of questions. Younger children will usually reach their limit at 5 to 10 minutes.

Appropriateness: This method is equally suited for use with all levels.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): Hello, Joseph.

Joseph (J): Hi.

I: Joseph, how old are you?

J: Six.

I: Where do you live?

J: In National City.

I: In National City...What have you been doing this summer?

J: Uh...Playing.

Open Questions[19]

Definition: A technique in which the interviewer poses an "open-ended" question which requires more than a yes/no answer.

Application: The interviewee responds to open-ended questions. These questions provide for individual differences in linguistic levels, personal interests, and linguistic styles. The interviewer poses questions that allow for a variety of answers. For example, the interviewer may ask, "What sport do you like best, and why?" or "Can you describe how you would feel if you had just lost your dog? What would you do?"

Characteristics:

Strengths: As mentioned earlier, this technique does allow for individual differences in style, personality, and levels of competence.

Weaknesses: Less verbal and introverted students are reluctant to answer open questions. They feel either uneasy or threatened.

Appropriateness: This technique is appropriate with elementary children, teenagers, and adults, as well as with younger children who are more verbal and are self-assured.

Sample:

Interviewer (I): What else have you done since you've been on summer vacation?

Joseph (J): Went to the mountains and to the zoo, went to Magic Mountain and went to the zoo, and I went to Sea World.

I: What else did you see there?

J: A...This...A...I ride on, I rode on a train...uh, and I saw buffaloes and bulls and horses, and ducks...and, and the chickens and ducks were loose. But the train didn't run over them.

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[19]Rich loc. cit.

CHAPTER SIX

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE LANGUAGE RESEARCHER

> One should always remember that a person always remains a person; he gets tired, has unconscious lapses of attention, is psychologically predisposed towards certain kinds of activity, acts emotionally has social prejudices, etc., which often have an unforeseen influence on the results of field work (Kibrik, 1977, p. 54).

The better qualified a researcher, the more accurate, valid and reliable the data to be gathered and, ultimately, the more valid and reliable the findings and conclusions.

This chapter will deal with two related factors: (1) the qualifications of the language researcher and (2) practical suggestions for interviewing young children.

Qualifications of the Language Researcher

Knowledge of or Familiarity with the Target Language: The specialized literature is full of erroneous "findings," undocumented generalizations, and examples of "speech deficiencies" found in English-Spanish bilingual children. A case in point: The Spanish language does

not have consonant clusters (blends) in final position. English has words like desk, desks, mast, masts where you find two or three consonants at the end of a word. In Spanish, a singular word sol (sun) becomes a plural word soles (suns) by adding an "e" (as in English bus, busses). Because of this, dominant-Spanish bilingual children have great difficulty in pronouncing final consonant clusters. This is sometimes considered a speech defect.

If the researcher does not speak the target language, an informant (informant, not informer) should be employed as an assistant to help in observing, interviewing, and recording the target language.

Basic Knowledge of Comparative Linguistics: If the language of bilingual children is to be recorded for the purpose of linguistic analysis, it is of the utmost importance that the researcher be familiar with the syntax, morphology, phonology, lexicon, and semantics of both languages: For example, the researcher should be aware that English has only one past tense while Spanish has two, that English vowels possess a larger number of phonemic and phonetic values than the Spanish vowels, that morphological patterns do not always follow the same rules (such as the English irregular plurals and the "'s" genitive form), and that meanings might be highly divergent from one language to the other.

Basic Knowledge of Child Psychology: There is a great difference between a shy, bashful child who won't speak to or with strangers and one who may have a language problem which would cause difficulty in enunciating speech. The researcher needs to know when to start and when to stop a linguistic interaction with a child. We have often witnessed situations where a young graduate student, after much effort and frustration, finally gets a "subject" for an interview. An ominous deadline is in the horizon; there is no possibility of grabbing another child because it is the end of the school year. What happens then? In spite of the fact that the child is not

willing to speak, the young researcher keeps asking questions and prodding the child to answer, usually in the infamous "complete sentence" modality. What does the researcher get? A distorted linguistic corpus.

Familiarity with the Customs and Ways of Life of the Linguistic Group Being Studied: The researcher should be familiar with some of the social patterns of behavior of the linguistic group under study. Listed below are some of the social patterns with which the researcher should become familiar:

1. The hierarchy of authority within the family

2. Attitudes of the family group toward strangers

3. Modalities of language in terms of age (the way youngsters address seniors), sex (the ways of address between spouses), family members (children to avunculars)

4. Ways in which deference and courtesy are expressed

5. What varieties of language (prestigious, dignified, colloquial) are used by members of the family

6. What social criteria the community may have established in terms of language "correctness"

7. What associations are made by the group between idiosyncratic ways of speaking and social status of speakers

8. What is considered "normal" speech by the community

9. In a bilingual community, is fluency in the politically dominant language considered an asset or a lack of loyalty to the group; is fluency in the vernacular a reason for pride or scorn

10. What gestures are considered normal nonverbal language; which ones are considered insulting, derogatory, or crude

11. In what way is decorum expressed in the language of the group

12. What social implications are associated with eye contact and/or eye avoidance

13. What is "taboo" in the community

14. The social, religious, and professional status of those individuals whose language is being recorded

Practical Suggestions for Interviewing Young Children

If you have lived with young children most of your life, in the capacity of older sibling, parent, grandparent, avuncular, or teacher, you are quite aware of the way they interact verbally and nonverbally with you and other members of their social milieu.

If you are a young researcher beginning to feel your path into the intricate jungles of language research, you might like to consider some of the ideas offered below.

Generally speaking, language interaction between child and adult is usually found to be more constrained than child-child interaction. In some cases you will find that a few small children do interact more freely and in a more spontaneous way with adult interlocutors. But this is the exception.

The key issue is to establish rapport with the child and to gain his/her confidence. Another factor conducive to maximum effectiveness is an informal atmosphere. A third factor is the presence or absence of other members of the family while children are interacting with the researcher: If the presence of a sister, brother, parent, or grandparent contributes to the child's feeling

of comfort and trust, that person should be encouraged to stay; if the youngster feels embarrassed by the presence of others, they should be excluded from the interaction.

Listed below are some practical hints:

1. Before interacting with children, read an introduction to child psychology, an introduction to first and second language acquisition, and an introduction to child development. These books should give you an overall background on various aspects of child life and development.

2. Familiarize yourself with toys, games, songs, foods, and other factors that might be popular with children at the time you are starting your interaction with the youngsters.

3. If you are going to interact with children at school, visit the school a few times before recordings take place. Make sure that children see you as another member of the school community rather than as a stranger who comes to "test" them.

4. Ask the teacher about interests that the children may have shared with the teacher. Are they interested in certain stories? Do they like to read books aloud? Are they talkative, introverted, quiet? Are they gregarious and friendly to strangers, or are they more private and reserved?

5. If you are going to interview children in their homes, make sure to visit with them ahead of time in order to be met by all the members of the family living in that home.

6. Spend some "fun time" with the children and their families. Come to visit when they are watching their favorite television programs and watch them

together, being as low-key as possible. Try to blend into the family environment.

7. Ask the parents/teachers about people, things, and activities that they have noticed the child has shown particular interest in.

   Who is his/her favorite sibling?
   Who is his/her favorite aunt or uncle?
   Who is his/her favorite sports hero?
   Who is his/her favorite comic/television hero?

   What is his/her preferred pet?
   What is his/her preferred toy?
   What is her/her preferred food?
   What is his/her preferred holiday?

   Does he/she like to color, paint?
   Does he/she play (or would like to play) a musical instrument?

8. If you are going to use a tape recorder, make sure that the child is not frightened or threatened by its presence. One activity that we have found to be extremely effective has been to let the child play with the tape recorder. You can make various sounds, record them, and play them back to the child. Then you can encourage him/her to do the same. You can teach him/her how to push the buttons for play-back, stop, etc. The more familiar the child is with that little machine, the more spontaneous his/her interaction will be when being recorded.

9. If you are going to use a video recorder, place it in a corner where it is as inconspicuous as possible. Make sure that the child does not feel threatened by the presence of the machine.

Remember: The more spontaneous the interaction, the more authentic the speech sample you will get.

To the reader: Copies of tapes with recorded speech of children are available upon request.

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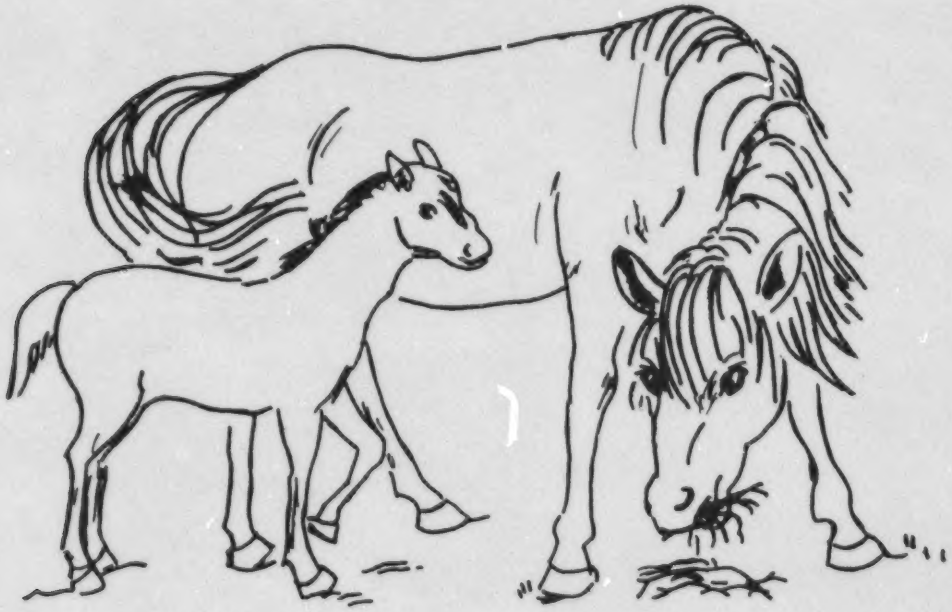
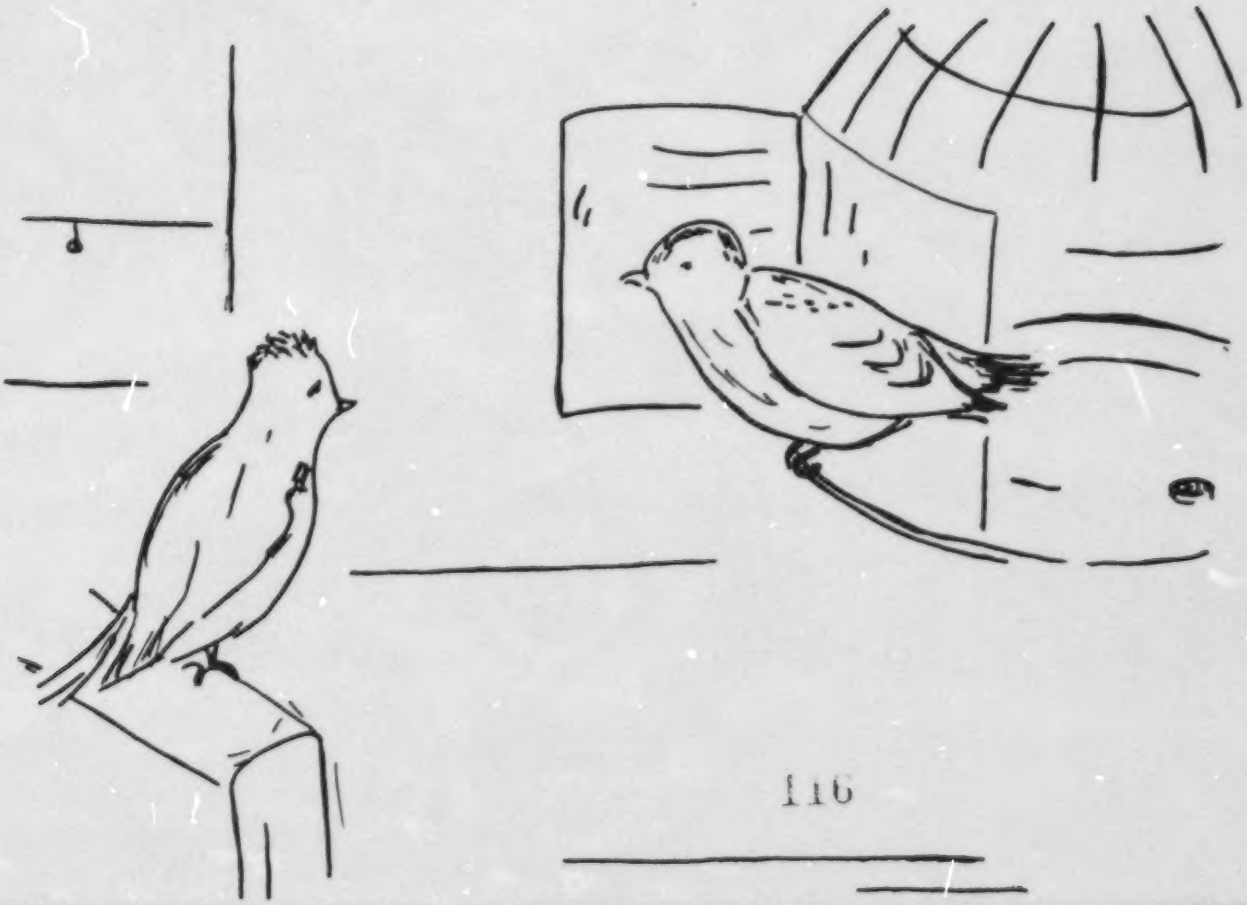
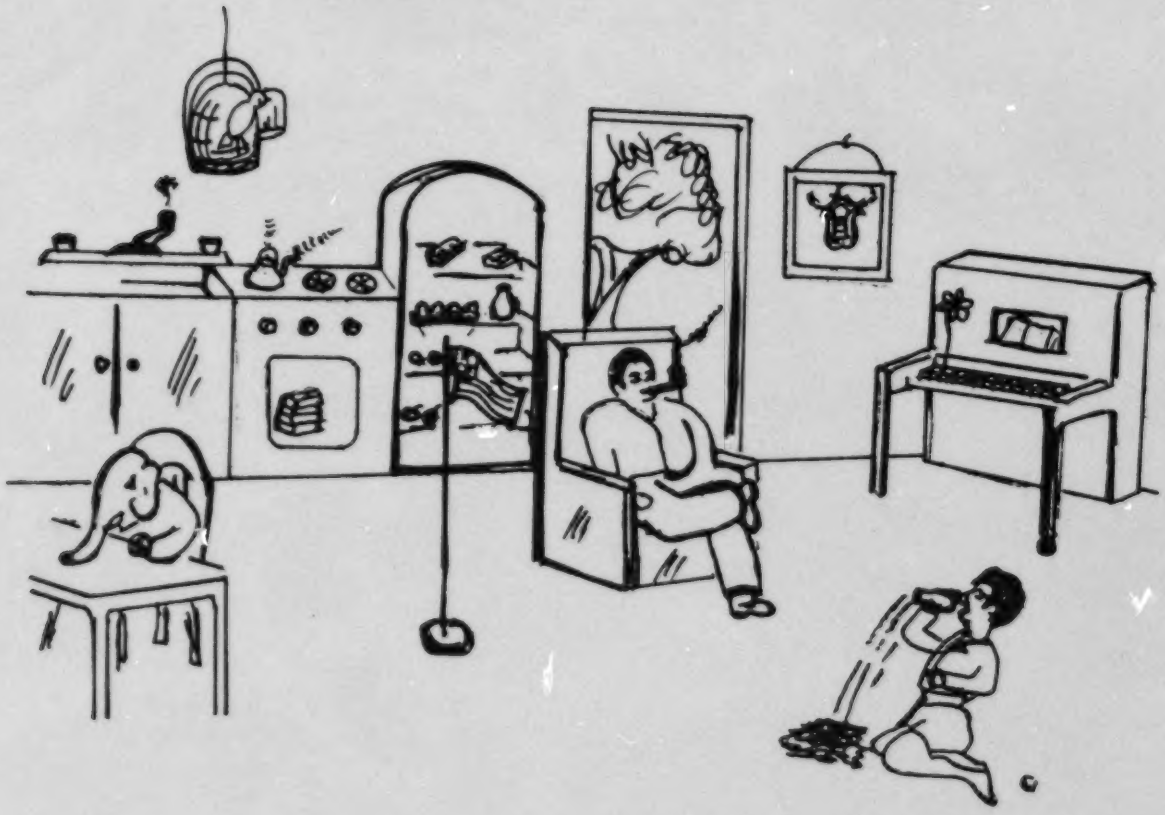
APPENDIX: Visuals

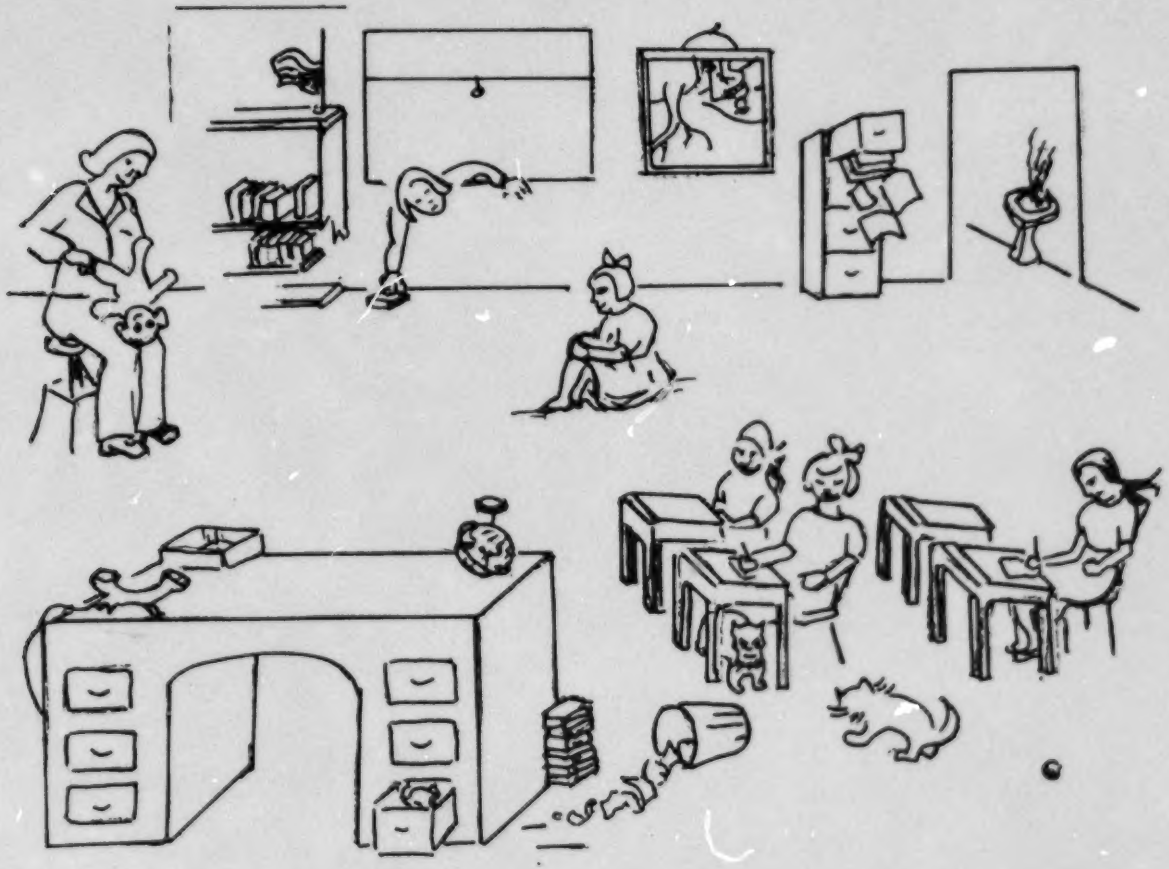
The pages that follow include visuals that were used as stimuli for spontaneous speech eliciation.

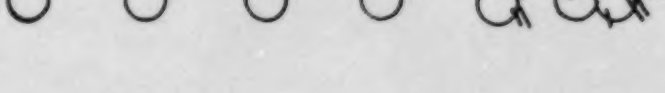
114

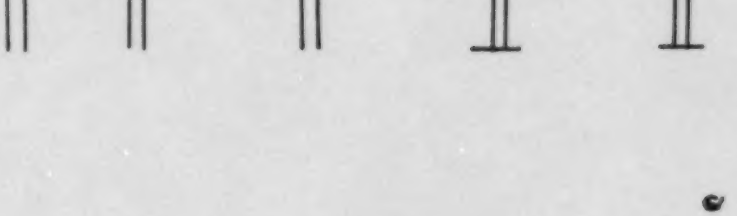












"I WONDER"

Cornejo, 1970, p. 152.

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